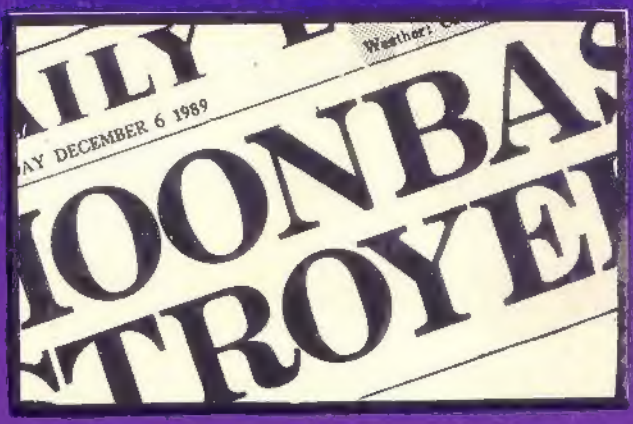
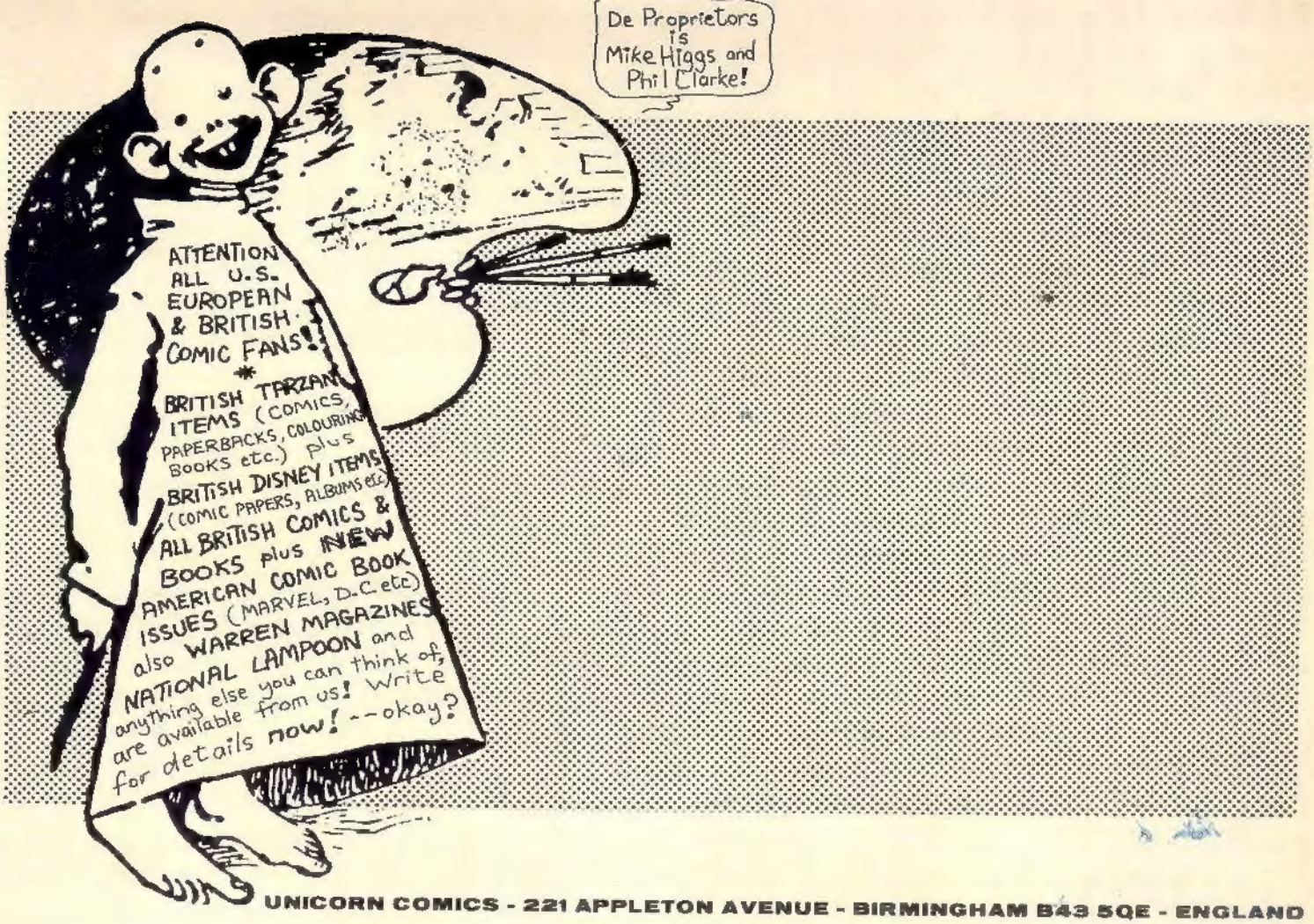
COMIC MEDIA

Jeff Hawke
BY SYDNEY JORDAN



20p/75c


De Proprietors is Mike Higgs and Phil Clarke!
ATTENTION ALL U.S. EUROPEAN & BRITISH COMIC FANS!
BRITISH TARZAN ITEMS (COMICS, PAPERBACKS, COLOURING BOOKS etc.) plus
BRITISH DISNEY ITEMS (COMIC PAPERS, ALBUMS etc.)
ALL BRITISH COMICS & BOOKS plus NEW AMERICAN COMIC BOOK ISSUES (MARVEL, D.C etc.)
also WARREN MAGAZINES
NATIONAL LAMPOON and anything else you can think of, are available from us! Write for details now! --okay?

UNICORN COMICS - 221 APPLETON AVENUE - BIRMINGHAM B43 5QE - ENGLAND

FANT-EC ADVERTISER

MAD MEMBER FAN ADDICT CLUB

'I-Deal in Comics'

MY STOCK RANGES FROM THE 1930's TO THE 1970's. THEY ARE FOR SALE AT THE ADDRESS BELOW ON ANY SATURDAY BETWEEN 9.00 am AND 5.00 pm. MY FULL LIST IS ISSUES APPROXIMATELY EVERY SIX WEEKS FOR ALL POSTAL CUSTOMERS AND IS SENT FREE UPON RECEIPT OF AN S.A.E.

I HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH COMICS AND FANZINES FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS AND HAVE NEVER HAD A SINGLE DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER.

I AM ON THE SCENE AT EVERY COMIC MART OR CONVENTION AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING BOTH OLD AND NEW COLLECTORS

Starting in early June the COMIC MEDIA DISTRIBUTION SERVICE will be importing new Marvels and DCs into this country. Also Warren's "Spirit" mag and any Marvel b&w's H.M. Customs will allow through. I will be handling the retail distribution side of this scheme. If you want to get your favourite titles ahead of the national distributors or get hold of thos elusive titles the distributors won't bring over - this is the scheme to join.

The DC's bearing the August cover date should be arriving first and, in general, the DC's will always be just ahead of the Marvels in arriving.

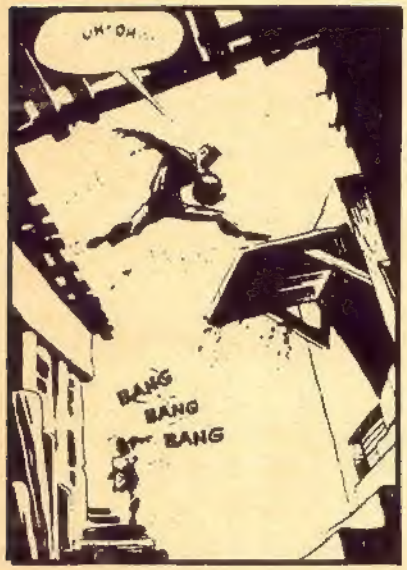
Write to me for full details. Regular lists of mags for sale will be put out by me and will appear in CM NEWS. Get on my mailing list NOW!

FRANK DOBSON
125 NEW CROSS ROAD,
NEW CROSS, LONDON SE14,
ENGLAND.

Editor & Publisher : Nick Landau
Editor: Richard Burton
Advertising Manager: Colin Campbell
Consultant Editor: Keith Mackenzie

PRODUCTION/DESIGN (Heroes all!)
Cow Gum King: Martin Lock
Letraset Lad: Richard Burton
Layout Lord: Nick Landau
Letratone Lady: Francesca Landau

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Charles Swift(US), Martin Lock (UK), Mike Niederman (Canada), Jean Claude Faur (France).



Features

SYDNEY JORDAN – MASTER OF FANTASY
The 'dynamic due' meet the creator of "Jeff Hawke". 5

SPOTLIGHT ON EUROPE
Gianni Bono on "Diabolik", Italy's master criminal. 42

Strips

THE SEEKERS
Part 2 of "Goddess of the Seven Moons" by John Burns and Phil Douglas. Unpublished in UK. 9

MODESTY BLAISE
Start of a new story, "Top Traitor" by Peter O'Donnell and Jim Holdaway. 19

THE SPIRIT
"The Leprachaun" by Will Eisner. 33

Regular Columns

EDITORIAL
"You are here" by the 'Layout Lord'. 4

LETTERS TO THE MEDIA
Where did all the letters go? 4

COMIC MEDIA REVIEW 27
"Dan Dare Annual" – Tom Darragh.
"The Trigan Empire" – Chris Lowder.
"Little Nemo" – Martin Lock.
"Corto Maltese" – Nick Landau.
"The People's Comic Book" – Martin Lock.
"The Savage Piano" – Nick Landau.

CREDITS: Cover: Sydney Jordan, design Janlan & Roylan; pp.3,4,27 Mike Higgs; pp.5 – 8, 13 – 18, 40 & 41: Sydney Jordan/Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd; pp. 9 – 12: Associated Newspapers Ltd.; pp. 19 – 26: Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd./Peter O'Donnell/ Jim Holdaway; pp. 28: Casterman/European Cartoonist; pp. 29: Anchor Press; pp. 31: IPC Magazines Ltd./ Ultima Thule; pp. 31: Durgaud Editeur; pp. 33 – 39: Will Eisner; pp. 42: Dave Gibbons, Astorina S.r.l., If; pp. 44: Dave Gibbons.

COMIC MEDIA vol.2 no.4, whole no.11, December 1973. Published twice yearly by Comic Media Publications, 10 Ladbroke walk, London W11 3PW, England. SUBSCRIPTIONS ADDRESS: 22 Woodhaw, Egham, Surrey. TW20 9AP, England. Single issue 20p. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: UK: 80p for 4 issues; US: $3.00 for 4 issues (75c per single issue) from Charles Swift, 4718 N. 9th St., Philadelphia, Pa.19141, USA; Canada: $3.00 for 4 issues (75c per single issue) from Mike Niederman, 1 Waverly Place, London, Ontario, Canada; other countries 30p per single issue. ADVERTISERS: Please enquire for rates. All contents copyright COMIC MEDIA PUBLICATIONS 1973/4 except where otherwise stated. BACK ISSUES: Comic Catalog Con Special, Comic Media 10 available @ 30p each. Comic Media News 4 and 6 available @ 6p each, CMN7, 8, 9 and 10 @ 13p each. Current issue 16p per copy.

Printed by SW (Litho) Printers Ltd [TU all depts], Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2

editorial

This issue sees a new look, or rather, a new relavance for COMIC MEDIA. After much discussion we have finally decided that written sf does not really have a place in CM, so both the sf book review section and Lee's "History of Science Fiction" have been temporarily shelved (but Lee can be found every month in COMIC MEDIA NEWS where he handles sf film, TV and book news as well as sf reviews). Also "Spotlight on Europe" will, each issue, be dealing more in depth with either a particular European artist or writer, or even comic or comic character. Lined up so far are features on Pilote, Druillet, Trinca, and Hergé. We will be giving extensive coverage (as we have in the past) to both British newspaper strips and (soon) comic artists and writers in the form of articles and interviews. However, the American scene is not forgotten and we have very interesting plans in mind for this area.

This summer will see the CM editorial staff in New York for the Comic Art Convention, where we hope to meet a lot of the friends we've been corresponding with, and also to gather material for future issues.

Also slated for the future are some new comic strips especially written and illustrated for CM by some of the most talented amateurs and professionals around. But for now, we have our current line-up of "Modesty"(still 3 or more stories to go before we catch up with the Gazette), "The Seekers"(who'll be replaced after this story ends) and "The Spirit" (who knows what the future holds?).

And now for the bad news. Because of University finals and a 3-month stay in Canada and the US this summer (so please don't expect a reply from me between July and September inclusive - all enquires to Richard at 22 Woodhaw, please) the next issue of CM will not be out until December, or November at the earliest. But after that we do hope that the frequency will be raised back to quarterly at least.

It appears that the U.K. Marvel comics crisis will be over in August. But until then they will not be available in this country, and even from August only about half (if that) of the titles will be coming over. The rest of the titles will be available from either Frank Dobson (the CM mail order representative) starting in July, or from UNICORN COMICS (who work on a 1p = 1c pricing system). The DC's are also available from both. We'd also like to point out that CMDS (Comic Media Distribution Service) is still functional and handling a variety of fanzines and books, under the auspices of Colin Campbell (see MFG ad).

Another piece of shocking news that came to us was the removal of Sydney Jordan's "Jeff Hawke" from the Daily Express. Syd has been drawing(and sometimes writing) the strip for over 20 years, and in my opinion must rate as one of our top newspaper strips (and I'm still a steady believer in British superiority in this field) of all time. Over the last 15 years the newspaper strip world has been steadily shrinking on Fleet St., and with the plight of our newspapers at the moment I can't see the situation improving.

We should like to thank Syd and his dog, the Great Dane, Jeeves, for the fantastic day that we spent in his huge Sussex mansion; Syd for the interview and dinner, and Jeeves for the extra comments (ever been licked by a Great Dane?) added during the interview!

We were very sorry to hear about the demise of Le Beaver, edited by those two devils in disguise, (Klepto-) Cliff Letovsky and (Randy) Ralph Alfonso. Le Beaver, a duplicated/ofset Canadian fanzine, was one of the most entertaining and (in devious ways) honest zines that we've ever come across, maintaining the highest standards in both writing and art. If you want to find out more about this zine (including their 176-page gargantuan summer special) through getting back issues, then contact Cliff at Box 345, Snowden Station, Montreal, Quebec, H3X 3TC, Canada. Back issues are 20p each. Highly recommended.

We are also sorry to be losing Dave Gibbons as one of our regular staff artists. Dave has now moved on into the professional circles, and will obviously have to devote the majority of his time to paid assignments (including some work for Marvel), though we hope to may still do the odd illo or three for us. But before he left (sob) he did complete one last masterpiece for our back cover. Good luck Dave (sob).

Another fan convert to professionalism is none other than your neighbourly fan ed of the '60s, Ian Penman, who is now writing for some of Felix Greene's comix. I believe that Ian still has a few copies of his zine, Armageddon, around, so if you haven't popped your eyeballs over it yet - 17p sent to 30 Weldon Ave., Grangetown, Sunderland, Co. Durham, would make a very good investment.

—Nick

Dear Richard and Nick,

Some comments on the well-worth-waiting-for COMIC MEDIA 10:-

I'm particularly pleased to see the greater amount of artwork now prevalent in the zine, as I commented in an earlier letter, comics are primarily a visual medium. The selection of strips in this issue certainly reflects my tastes. Although I've only read a few "Spirit" strips, the series is one of my all-time favourites, I hope more examples will be featured in later issues.

I've never followed "Modesty Blaise" in the Evening Standard, I've only read the novels, but the feature in CM9 certainly rekindled my interest. I hope Peter O'Donnell succeeds in producing a "Modesty Blaise" TV series - it could well become a 'cult' series.

"The Seekers" was another good choice - I look forward to future episodes.

I'm afraid Christian Freitag's article didn't really appeal to me. Lee Hopewell's "History of SF" continues its high standard. The Book Review section was most interesting, particularly Chris Lowder's comments on Hogarth's "Tarzan".

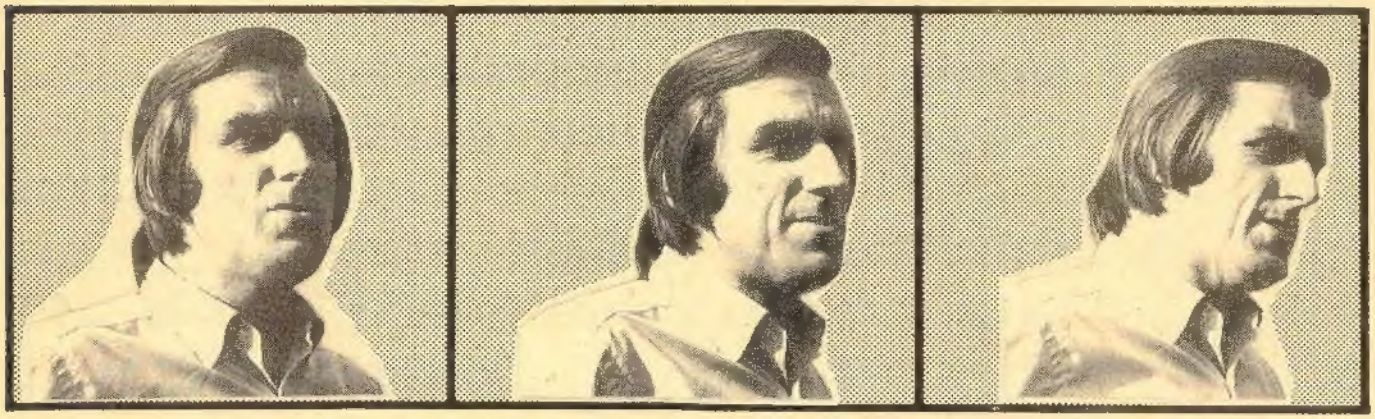
I hope future issues will feature a large Opinion/Discussion/LoC page. Richard's comments this issue about the "Golden Age of Comics"/Nostalgia argument parallel my views: 1940s comics are, for the most part, badly drawn and poorly written by comparison with today's efforts, although certain examples stand out and these are possibly worth forking out money for. But most of these so-called 'classics' have been reprinted in one form or another (I'm thinking particularly of E. Nelson Bridwell's selections for the recent 100-page Super Spectaculars and run of reprints during the 25¢/52-page period). I used to think I was interested in 'old' comics, but at the September Comic Mart, out of £10 worth of comics I bought, only one was a pre-1973 issue, and that was a 1971 Action Comics which I had missed! The quality of comics continues to progress and as Lee Hopewell states, "By any standards the present quality is 'The Golden Age'", but next year's comics may be even better.

Allan Palmer,
Basingstoke,
Hants.

(Thanks once more, Allan, for your words to CM. Special thanks for your reactions to my views of the so-called 'Golden Age'. It seems amazing that the only reactions I have had to the article have been totally in agreement with my opinions! Now I know there are some staunch defenders of this period in fandom - do you want to take all this lying down? The Opinion page can only function if we have contributions to it, so the reason for the lack of it in this issue is very apparent. Is British fandom deader than I thought? - R.)

Two full pages of your letters was planned for this issue but lack of space has forced us to cut down to half a page, and one letter. Our thanks and deep apologies to the following people who were scheduled to have their letters included in CM11:- Dave McLintock (excellant letter Dave, it would have been included here if it didn't mean savage cutting), Pete Scott, Dave McCulloch (whose comments on "Modesty Blaise" we'll try an include in a future issue), and Phil Clarke (sorry Phil). Not forgetting everyone who wrote to CM - it's good to feel wanted! Full LoC page next issue - promise.

SYDNEY JORDAN



MASTER OF FANTASY

CM: Could you take us through the events that led up to the start of Jeff Hawke?

SJ: When I was in Scotland I took what you would call the A levels and O levels. That was in 1945. And then I went to Miles Aircraft Technical College in Reading to become an aircraft engineer. I spent two years there. I learned a great deal about aeroplanes but I also learned that I wasn't going to make an engineer ! And then that school started to change in character and they were really looking for people who wanted to work in industry, so I came back to Scotland. I got a job in a little studio in Dundee working for a chap who had known my father before the war. Now, I found myself in a group of very professional artists who had all, in their day, worked for D.C.Thomson, and they were really masters of the comic as the comic existed then in D.C.Thomson publications. They really showed me a great deal about technique but it didn't take me long to realise that the style of their comics was very staid, and very old fashioned, because of the demands of the market at the time. I began at this time to study the American comics, the colour sections, and I could see that that was the direction in which I wished to go because the drawing and the story in what I regard to be the best of them, "Steve Canyon" by Caniff and George Wunder's "Terry & the Pirates", seemed to me to be an amalgam of drawing and writing that gave great facility of expression and so I began to imitate them and at the same time the Daily Mail had began to run the Alex Raymond strip "Rip Kirby". Now colour was out then, because the only comic at the time that was showing any sign of colour was "Eagle" which was being done in a very thorough way. But somehow I wasn't as impressed with the "Eagle" artwork - although it was extremely good, the standard of "Eagle" was very high - I still stuck to the notion that there was a kind of literary quality about the best American strip which was indefinable, but I felt it was superior anyway. With Alex Raymond's drawings being there in newspaper strip style it was a very good field to turn to for information, and although I was helped along by other people in Scotland, they were all very fine artists and I salute them now because they did push me along the road, I must say that Raymond was a very influential artist in my early days for me. I think it's true to say that many of my contemporaries owe just as much to him because he did produce a strip that was at once 'cinematic' and also extremely well drawn.

CM: When you set out for a career was it your intention beforehand to go into the drawing of strips or was that something that you went into because, well, you weren't getting into something else?

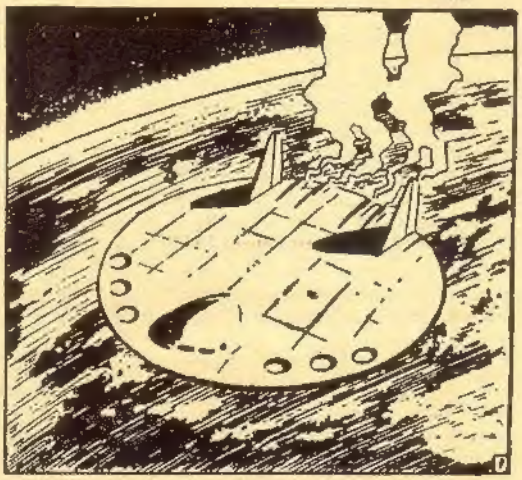
SJ: No, not exactly. I'd always been good at art, good in the provincial sense, in the small boy/whiz kid sense, I'd got very good marks at school, that kind of thing. I had always wanted to draw and I think I probably went to Miles Aircraft because I was interested in aeroplanes rather than to be an engineer. It was a tremendous education for me because, coming from a wee town in Scotland and seeing England, and seeing London, and seeing the world as it was, to me, it seemed a very big place then. We lived in a big house as students and I never really lost my interest in large old houses - that's why you find me in one now. I think if I am in any way artistic at all I think this is the aspect that shows. I am interested in workmanship, houses of that kind intrigue me because I can see that they have been made with the same kind of attention to detail that I bring to the strip and I think that most creative people tend to look for that. I read a good deal of science fiction at that time and I read many comic books, Superman and that kind of thing. I could see that the masters of the technique in terms of photographic realism really were the Americans. At that time one of the chaps, Len Fullerton, who was a great naturalist artist but could also draw very fine comic stuff, he introduced me to Raymond's "Flash Gordon" because he had a great deal of them which he had saved over the years. These were very early war-year productions. I thought they were very stylish and I liked the idea of the illustrations without balloons. Now I would think that I've come away from that because, looking back on them the drawings are marvellous but the action and the characterisation is a little stilted because of that. I think that the balloon, although on the face of it seems an intrusion into the drawing, is a very immediate and a very racy way of getting over an idea. So I would say that really I had just that kind of cumupance to provide me with the sort of background one would need to write and draw comic strips.

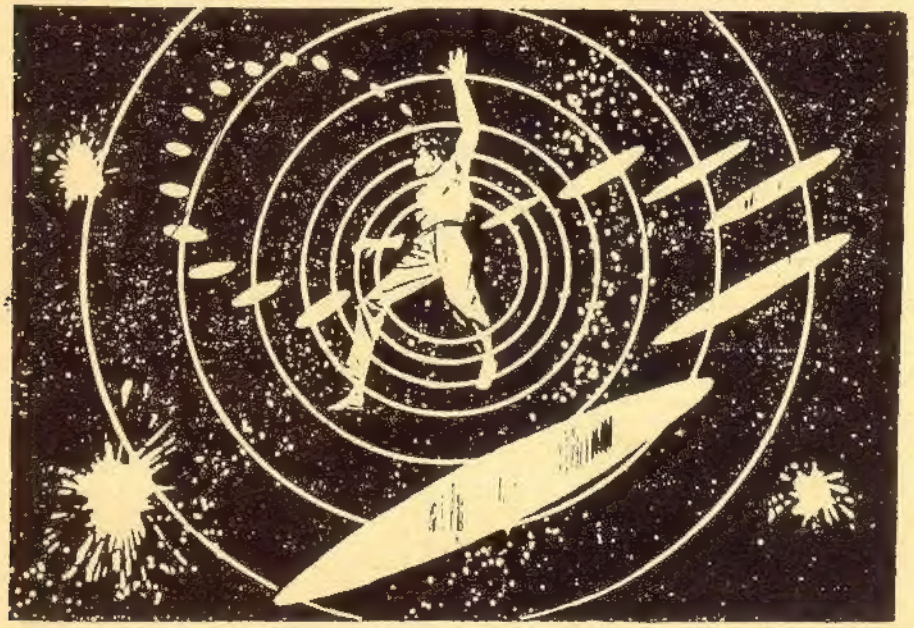
CM: How did you bridge the next gap, though?

SJ: I was helping other people with work. I was helping a chap who was working through that studio and was drawing a girly strip for a local Scottish paper, I was inking in over his pencils, and then gradually I began to lay out the thing and then he would help me with my cancelling. From then on it virtually became my strip. It was called "Dora, Tony and Liz", it was a shop-girl thing. You had one young lad and two girls one of who was a little bit 'blue stocking', you know, spectacles, and the other was a glamour queen. It was quite fun, it was supposed to be humourous. Looking back on the drawings they were quite good because they were all cribbed from Alex Raymond ! I wasn't too blatant about it though. I really began to get confidence then and in that interim with helping Len Fullerton and his "Flash Gordon" strips I produced a character called "Orion". I remember I did the first strip of "Orion" with his help, and I did it on scraper board for some reason, I can't imagine why. This was the time of the flying saucer craze. It was about 1950

JEFF HAWKE

SPACE RIDER





and Thomas Montell had already been killed supposedly chasing a flying saucer, that very famous first sighting where a chap chased a flying saucer and partly collided with it. So with that in mind I drew this character, I saw him as a kind of cross between Superman and Flash Gordon, with a cloak and all the trappings of the superman ethos. He began as an R.A.F. pilot who chases a flying saucer, collides with it but is in fact snatched from the blazing wreckage. He is taken into the flying saucer and a great metamorphosis takes place in which he is turned into a kind of superman, that was my way to get into this 'space rider' idea. I came to London on holiday in that year and I had the drawing with me. I had a little bit of work running with what was then Amalgamated Press, which is now IPC, and I went down to meet the people I was working for. They were very nice to me and the work was going quite well – illustrations – but very tight, they were very demanding, they wanted stuff that would fit into their programme and it was rather pedestrian in a way. I suppose I have Tony Weare to thank for my luck because I was standing in The Strand looking at a showcase outside a little agency, just where The Strand meets Fleet Street, and this agency was handling Tony Weare's work when he was drawing for "Mickey Mouse Weekly" and he was drawing a very very fine comic strip called "Billy Brave". I was standing and admiring this and a couple of chaps came along, they saw me with my folio under my arm and they asked me if I was an artist and I said yes I was. They asked me if I would like to come upstairs because they were looking for chaps to draw a series of comic books on health and strength. Had anybody made me an offer like that now I would be very suspicious ! But in fact it was perfectly genuine ! They saw my work, and reckoned it was good enough to do what they wanted and so they made me an offer that if I came downto work in London I would be guaranteed a minimum of £20 a week, which, of course in 1952 was a small fortune – that was a lot of money. So, I packed up my bags and I came down to England and I began to work there. That must've been the happiest time of my life because it was all on-going and I was right in the heart of a big scene, we were turning these things out, Jim Holdaway was there working – drawing just as well as he has ever done – drawing us all under the table, but he was a good mark to aim for. I remember the first thing I got published there was a character called "Dick Hercules" who was a schoolboy, and his pal Prof. who actually looks rather like you Nick ! Together they were 'strength through joy-boys' but they always did the right thing – they would help old ladies, punch the crooks and then it was all wham, bam. When I look back on the drawings now they were pretty hammy, but we were getting into it. Now I had this "Orion" character kicking about while I was working at the agency.... the agency was

JEFF HAWKE FIRST DAY — FEB. 1954

run by Eric Souster and Bill Bailey, Eric was quite a with-it character, he was a good man to show one around London and show one the sights, he was quite a handsome and dashing lad. And Bill Bailey was an ex-circus acrobat, he was a fine artist, he was a very good on portraiture and all that kind of thing. So between them, they went to the Daily Express and they sold them the idea for this strip. Now this was relatively soon after the war, only seven years. Sir Max Aitken, Beaverbrook's son, of course, had been a fighter pilot and a lot of people in the Daily Express were old friends from his squadron, so what they wanted was for this guy to be called Jeff Hawke; they in fact invented the name. It was the R.A.F. hat that got them, this character had the hat on and I suppose it struck a note with them because they were all very young people then, they had just finished fighting. That was the only embargo that they put on it - that he would be on R.A.F. officer and he would be called Jeff Hawke and from there on he could hit that flying saucer if he wanted to ! And that's exactly what I had him do. He was taken up by these people called "The Shining Ones" which I'm sure I lifted from some very early science fiction thing, that idea of an entity. And it's interesting to note that the idea, which was not original to me, although the mechanism of it was - the idea of being 'taken up' was a very old sf one and it's incredible how well it wore, so much so that Kubrick's "2001" could be exactly that - the idea of super-entities bringing man along. In those days sf was a very minor art form as far as the general public were concerned, so I really had a clear field. What I had to avoid was falling into the trap of drawing just another "Flash Gordon" and I'm afraid that the first story, the first adventure that Hawke became involved in after his metamorphosis was a bit like "Flash Gordon" but it gradually developed into quite a scientific exercise, trying to relate the stories to current events. I remember at the time of the Bikini bomb that I had this thing about a robot coming and blowing up all the atomic weapons in the world; that was my little protest about that and the paper allowed it to go in. Beaverbrook was alive then and just to indicate the kind of grip that man had on the newspaper; I did start a story in which the United Nations was mentioned and all the armies of the world were brought onto this island to train as a world army, he actually saw this beginning in the paper and he rang from Canada and said that he didn't really want that in his paper. He was very nice about it, but it wasn't his policy then to support the U.N., or World Government or anyone else, and I had to change the strip, but only marginally in the sense that I stopped the idea of the world army and the story went on pretty well. It was interesting to me then and it was heartening to know that the man who ran the paper was watching even down to the comic strips. So really one realised that there was a certain sense of obligation to the paper and its style, and from then on we rather tended to conform to certain strictures. Not too many bug-eyed monsters and that sort of thing. It started in February 1954 and a year or so later we were pretty well into technology, landing on the Moon and things like that - which was anticipating things by quite a long way.

CM: It wasn't that difficult to change the strip then? When Beaverbrook rang from Canada and asked for these things to be done, I would have thought that any changes would've caused considerable difficulties along the line.

SJ: Well, I'm never really - and this is one of the realities of how I do my strip - I'm never terribly far ahead of the paper. By contract I'm supposed to be four weeks ahead, and I'm further ahead than that for holidays and things, but in fact, in those days I was tending to ad lib the stories so it was very easy to change. Had there been any real problem they would, of course, have compromised. A newspaper is very loathe to stop a strip or to do anything drastic to the strip unless it really has gotten beyond the pale. Putting strips in the newspaper allows that page to be made up very early on, and so once you've got a strip in a newspaper, especially if it's ever-improving, you're on to a pretty sure thing. Talking about editorials; the Express, about 1958, set up a comic strip editorial. Now this was quite unusual, because most of the papers had the feature people handling the comic strips, the literary editor was handling "Jeff Hawke" for me to begin with, a man called Anthony Hern who's now literary editor of the Evening Standard. He used to make comments and was very sympathetic. But now the strips had an editorial all to themselves, and the chap who is running it now is Hartley Ramsey. He is a fellow Scot, and ex sub-editor, a fine painter and, for me, a invaluable help in trouble because sometimes the stories do get to a point where there are two possibilities. I don't always write my stories from beginning to end in every detail - the story begins to write itself, you know. You set up the beginning, you have a theme which is running through and half-way through the story the thing has become quite organic and, for me anyway, it seems to present two or three possibilities and one can choose between three or four possible endings, and in that case I often discuss it with him, which is only right, and he will help me make a decision.

CM: I understand that Chester Gould used to go the extent of doing the scripts almost day by day - he would have absolutely no idea of how the story was going to end.

SJ: That's very interesting, because the paper is very lenient with me and they don't ask for great long rigamaroles or synopses, other than a broad idea. I'm talking about Ramsey and his team - these people have been put there so that the higher echelons don't have to worry about the comic strips. They are very flexible and they do tend to give an awful lot of elbow room. I thought that all the American strips were run on very tight lines and that the individual was very much in the hands of King Features, or whoever the agency was. I remember that Raymond used to do a great deal of committee work with a group - he used to go to New York two or three times a week to discuss scripts. Ramsey has said to me that although I have given him a hard time sometimes that in this opinion the very best comic strips seem to stem from the one person. Writing and drawing. He has written a book on strips which is probably coming out fairly soon now. Now, in the case of someone like Peter O'Donnell and "Modesty Blaise", I think Peter enjoyed a relationship with Jim Holdaway which was probably unique - they really did understand one another because they had in fact been doing a strip called "Romeo Brown in the Mirror and Peter O'Donnell is a real professional and Jim was a very organised sort of fellow and I think they really clicked. Similarly, when I was working with Willy Patterson we also got on extremely well because Willy and I both had the same upbringing, we enjoyed the same things and he had that imaginative way of looking at life that was good for a comic strip. But I think that in choosing a science fiction theme I did myself a service because it means that I am never stuck for an exotic locale. I am not lumbered with a detective who has to pick up clues - I can have a detective story or a love story or a space opera, I can do anything, I am very fortunate in that way. I don't think I really thought that out in the beginning but it certainly has worked like that because I would have thought, for instance, in the case of Harry Bishop ("Gun Law") that he's got a real problem with cowboys - it's a field that has been done to death so he's always got to be on his mettle to produce something that people will read.

CM: There are so many series these days in which one story is very much like another and it gets terribly boring.

SJ: The other day I was given some semi-underground comics and one of them contained a space epic which I thought was extremely well done and I thought the drawings, although they wouldn't have done for the Express, were, in total, extremely dramatic and the use of black and repetitive pictures showing the ship moving away was done extremely well. If my drawings have improved, and I think they have - I think the whole tone of the strip has improved over the years. I think that it is because I am not afraid to recognise where other people are doing something better than I can, and then I have simply taken it into my own orbit, as it were. I don't have any hard and fast ideas about being the best science fiction comic strip artist in the world ! I think I've made a mark and I think that if my strips were produced in book form they would probably

make a bigger mark, but I do see stuff which draws me up short and I think that's extremely good for me; stuff which seems to me to be leading to something else which my strip may not be. My strip has to maintain this seriality; it has to keep a certain standard of drawing and a certain level of interest but I can see that in the underground comics the sky's the limit really. I did see a comic strip in one of those comics on H.P. Lovecraft's stories. Now, you see, I think that was badly done for this reason – the story was there, Lovecraft's language is unbeatable – but what you wanted was a stunningly realistic and imaginative interpretation of Lovecraft's story. What you got was a lot of bad drawing where the drama of the story had not been brought out and it was only the uniqueness of the story, in my view, that carried the thing along. On the other hand, where you have "Conan" that's OK because that's brand new stuff. The chap is drawing to a theme which is new, although it's based on old legend and all that sort of thing, it's very good and one doesn't mind that. But when you've got a classic – I mean it's no good drawing in a Mickey Mouse way if your're going to be illustrating "The Cask of Amontillado", because the theme is already there very strongly. What you want to see, I would have thought, is an absolutely stunning, realistic and at the same time, dramatic, interpretation.

CM: Getting back to "Jeff Hawke", I wanted to ask you a bit about the scripting and things like that. You wrote the first two or three stories and after that..

SJ: Well, I have an old school friend, Willy Patterson , and I began to pump him for ideas and we had a period of about a year and a half in which he was feeding the idea which I then developed and he would feed me lines of dialogue and things like that. It worked very well. He would, in fact, inspire me and together we were producing stories which were bringing the strip along in a certain way. Now when they set up the editorial they offered – at that time it was their policy because they had seen other people do it – to have a script writer and an artist, and they said to me would I like to have a script writer, and I said if you are forcing one on me it has to be Willy Patterson. At that time he had come to London and was working for Amalgamated Press collating stuff for the "Children's Encyclopaedia". He was a bit of jack of all trades he was a very, very literary chap (Greek and Latin and Shakespeare) all of which one could see emerging in the strip. So he began to write the stories as a paid member of the group and he continued to write stories virtually in an unbroken line right up till about three years ago. He would write the story page by page with the number of the page and a description of what he wanted me to draw, very graphically, especially if it was difficult, with some idea that he had in mind. Can I just digress here and show you just what kind of a mind Willy Patterson had? Although he wasn't an artist, he could visualise and put into words something which someone like myself could pick up. He would say things like, "Imagine a space ship a mile wide and a mile high presenting an absolutely square flat wall to the universe, mirrored, so that the stars would be mirrored in the wall. If you got so near this great, mighty spaceship that the outside edges of the thing disappeared, you would be looking at what seemed to be space and then this little tiny magic casement would open, as the airlock opened, and it would be like a hole in space." Now this was a pretty imaginative flight of fancy and Willy was full of that kind of thing. He was very good on characters but he did tend to , in the end, to bring in so many oddballs that the story began to get bogged down in conversation and I think that we were then obliged to draw a halt to that kind of story for a while and go into something rather more 'cops and robbers'.

CM: Have you got a particular favourite story of Willy's?

SJ: I think the finest one which Willy ever did was the one in which the alien was changed into the baby – and the baby was the alien! It was called "The Changeling" and this little 'bee-hive' character was transmogrefied into a baby. It made for some very funny dialogue. The communicator between the ship, which was in orbit round the Earth (this was long before our own space shots), and the alien, who was tucked inside the teddy bear! At night when the nurse tucked the baby in, who was this little character called Klosk – was talking through the bear to the people in space – it was very funny. And the editor at the time, Bob Edwards, actually called me in to say how much he was enjoying it. It was a very very good story and it was Willy at his best. It'll no doubt come out in book form and people will enjoy reading it in that way.

CM: I noticed that he brought a lot of creatures into the stories.

SJ: Yes. Now they were very funny. The big villian, Chalcedon, had this entourage of lesser villians and the idea was very good and I think that, looking back on that, it could have been streamlined a little. It did get a little bit wordy but the characters themselves were quite novel and in fact the interplay between His Excellency and the little lemon-headed chap was often very witty. People enjoyed that. For example: His Excellency, he was rather a testy old fellow, people thought that we were really pretending that he was Lord Beaverbrook. I don't think Lord Beaverbrook would have minded because His Excellency was really a good-hearted soul although he was a bit overwhelming.

CM: What was His Excellency's role as such?

SJ: He was Overlord of the Galactic Federation. You see we did dip into what for science fiction fans is perfectly acceptable lore, that there is a Galactic Federation at the heart of things. In fact one of Willy's favourite phrases was, "Twenty-thousand light years away at the heart of things...." Willy loved the idea of a vast, populated galaxy, and we were on the outside rim of it, really a rather shabby, threadbare set-up where the driftwood of space had ended up.

CM: Does this mean that at certain times Jeff Hawke might have been called up by His Excellency?

SJ: Indeed he was called up. In fact in one story Willy wrote, a very good one called "Counsel For the Defense", Chalcedon who was a great villian, but a loveable rogue, was being arraigned for some crime or other and he, through the nature of galactic domestic law, was able to call on anybody to act as a defense counsel and he summoned Jeff Hawke. And these two extraordinary creatures land in the middle of Surrey and walk into this pub and read a great writ of Habeus Corpus to Jeff, who's having a drink at the bar. Meanwhile all the customers are disappearing through the windows without opening them, and they take Jeff away – it was very clever. Willy's idea was that nobody was truly evil – it was rather like a fairy story – nobody really gets killed. You'll find in the strip that very few people actually get killed. Certainly few people that you get to know in the strip are killed, perhaps people in the background. I haven't ever gone into direct violence in that way. Now this is, in a way failing, because there is life and death. Gradually we've moved away from that situation because I have tried to bring in love and death and tried to make things a little more lifelike. I can think of a story that Willy wrote about the chap who built a Sopwith Camel and crashed because in fact he was the victim of a ghostly intervention. But, you see, how far can you take a comic strip? How much social comment can one make in a comic strip?

CM: There's a lot being made nowadays. An example being the "Steve Canyon" strip. Recently he's been very much involved in the Israeli situation.

SJ: Has he? Well Steve Canyon's brief is to be where the fighting is. No, you're absolutely right. Thinking back, Canyon...Milton Caniff can kill people off quite regularly because, I think he realised that that is the essence of drama, you know, life and death. We've tended to skip round it to some extent but I don't think one can really avoid it in the long run, and I daresay that a lot more people will be killed off in "Jeff Hawke" from now on!

contd. on page 13

THE SEEKERS

continued

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns &
P. Douglas

T270

THIS IS A TIME TANK, IN WHICH I CAN TRANSPORT THE OCCUPANTS TO ANY PERIOD OF THE GALAXIES!

AND FOR *YOU* BOTH I HAVE PROGRAMMED A *SPECIAL* DESTINATION IN TIME!

AS LONG AS IT'S NOT THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. I NEVER COULD KEEP MY HEAD IN A FREE-FOR-ALL!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns &
P. Douglas

THE SEEKERS *ARE FORCED INTO THE TIME TANK...*

WHERE ARE YOU SENDING US?

T271

BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM — BEYOND THE BARRIER! BYE! HOPE YOU ARRIVE SAFELY!

WOULDN'T MAKE ANY BETS ON US ARRIVING *AT ALL*, WOULD YOU?

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns &
P. Douglas

JACOB, WE'RE TRAPPED IN THIS TIME TANK WITH ALL THE VIOLENT KILLERS OF HISTORY!

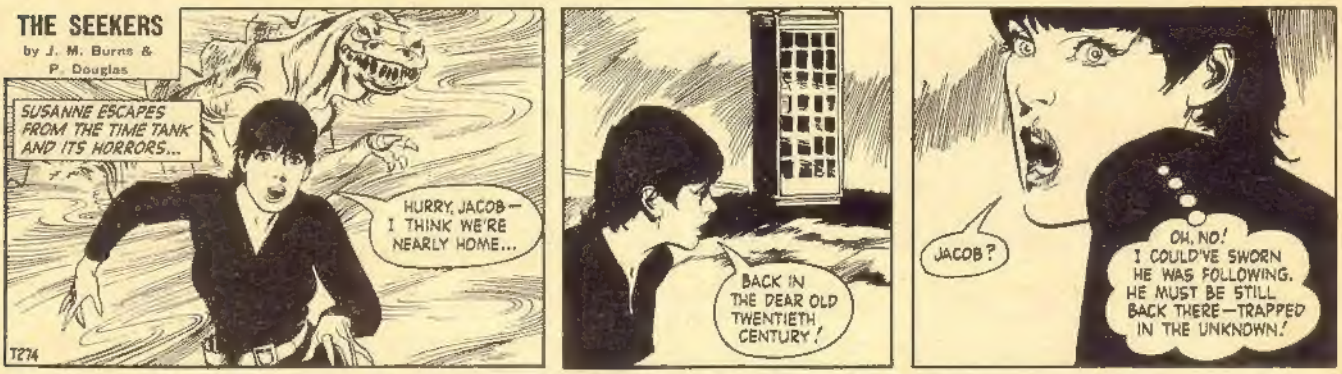
HOW 'BOUT TELLING ME SOMETHING I *DON'T* KNOW, SWEETHEART?

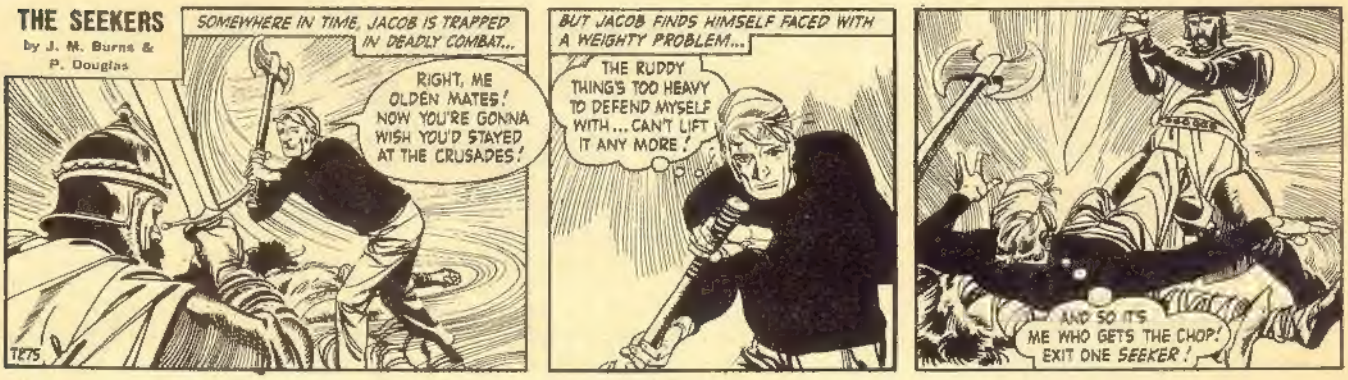
T272

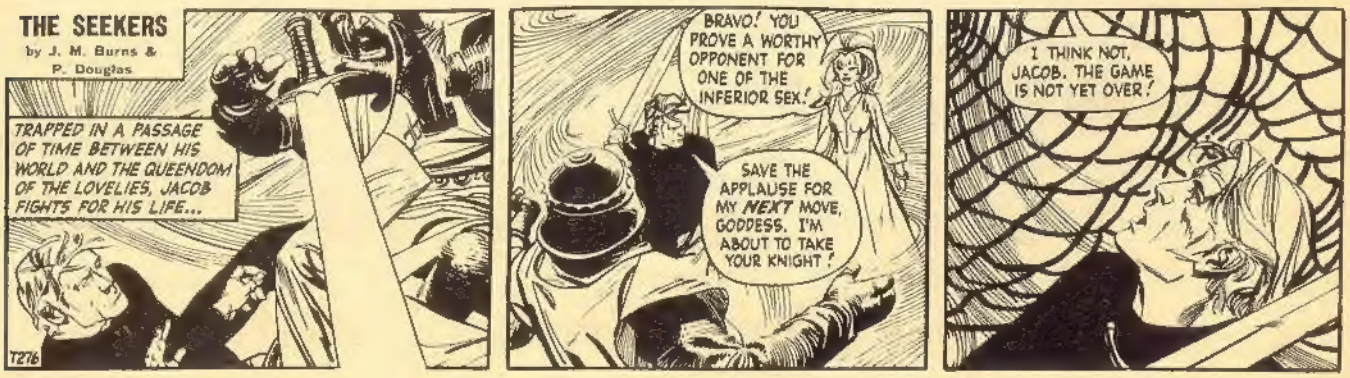
HERE, TAKE THIS — THE VITAL EVIDENCE IN THE PELHAM ASSIGNMENT — IN CASE ONLY ONE OF US EVER GETS OUT OF THIS UNKNOWN HELL!

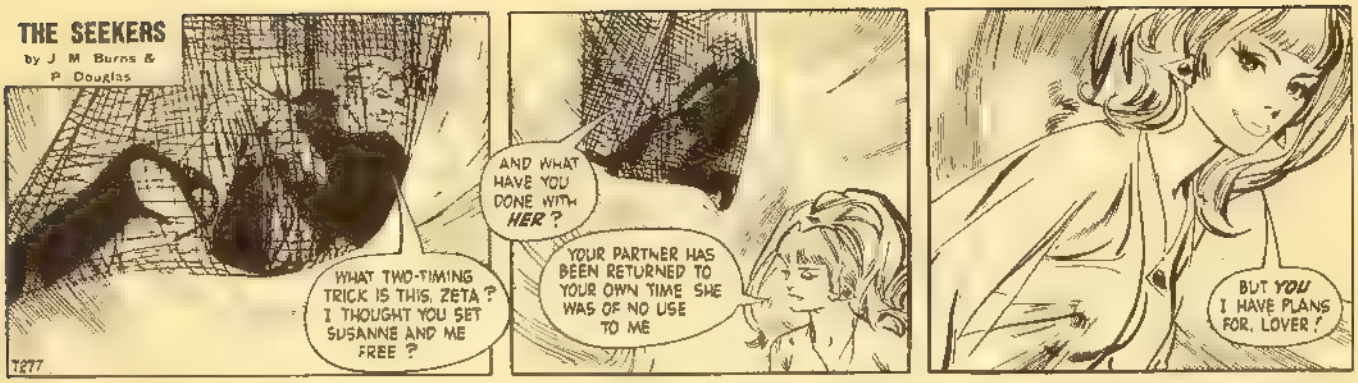
AND IT LOOKS LIKE *I* MAY BE DETAINED A WHILE!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
T275
IT MAY BE ALL UP FOR US, BUT WE'LL GIVE THESE BLOODTHIRSTY BLIGHTERS A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY, LOVE!
TRAPPED IN THE PASSAGES OF TIME, JACOB AND SUSANNE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL...
YOU BET! AND I'M NOT GONNA STOP RUNNING!
ONLY WHICH WAY DO I GO FOR THE TWENTIETH CENTURY?


THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
SUSANNE ESCAPES FROM THE TIME TANK AND ITS HORRORS...
HURRY, JACOB— I THINK WE'RE NEARLY HOME...
T274
BACK IN THE DEAR OLD TWENTIETH CENTURY!
JACOB?
OH, NO! I COULD'VE SWORN HE WAS FOLLOWING. HE MUST BE STILL BACK THERE—TRAPPED IN THE UNKNOWN!

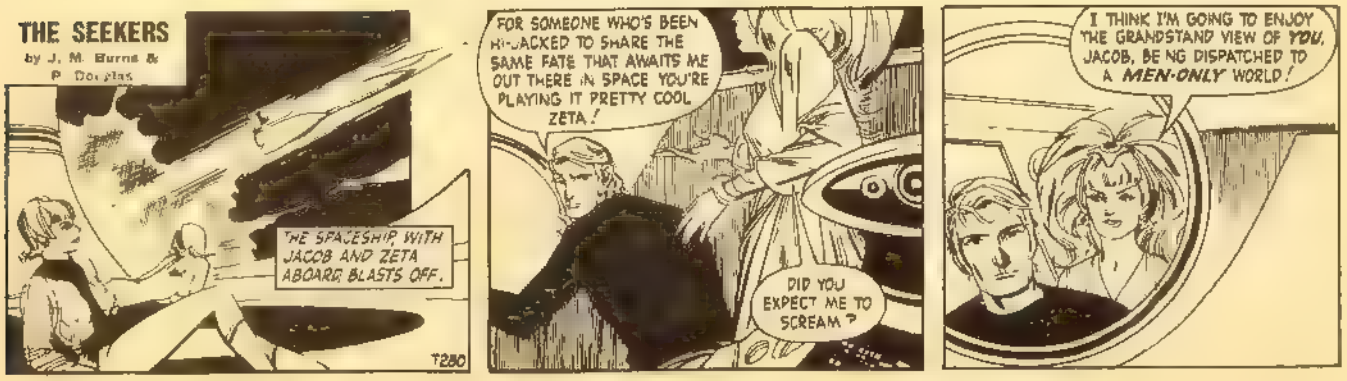

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
SOMEWHERE IN TIME, JACOB IS TRAPPED IN DEADLY COMBAT...
RIGHT, ME OLDEN MATES! NOW YOU'RE GONNA WISH YOU'D STAYED AT THE CRUSADES!
T275
BUT JACOB FINDS HIMSELF FACED WITH A WEIGHTY PROBLEM...
THE RUDDY THING'S TOO HEAVY TO DEFEND MYSELF WITH... CAN'T LIFT IT ANY MORE!
AND SO IT'S ME WHO GETS THE CHOP! EXIT ONE SEEKER!

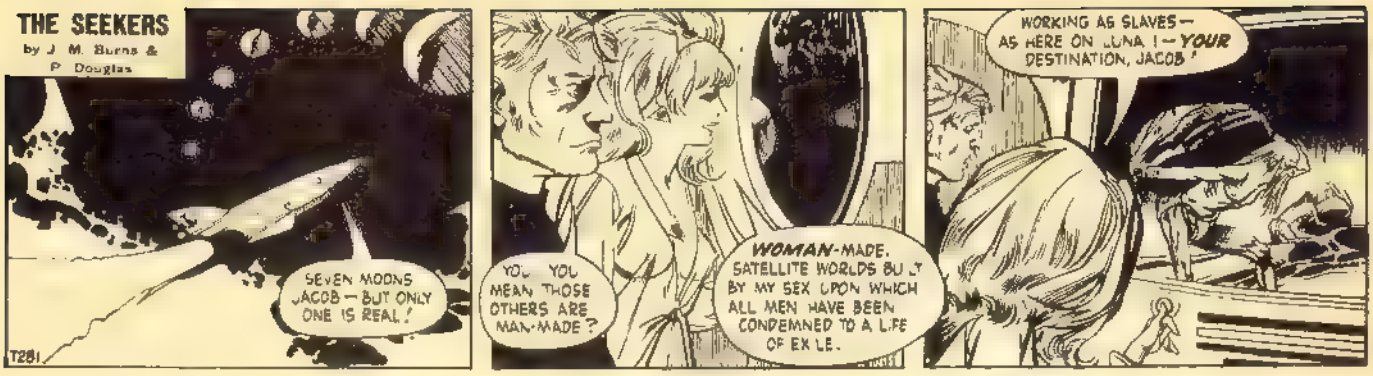

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
TRAPPED IN A PASSAGE OF TIME BETWEEN HIS WORLD AND THE QUEENDOM OF THE LOVELIES, JACOB FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE...
T276
BRAVO! YOU PROVE A WORTHY OPPONENT FOR ONE OF THE INFERIOR SEX!
SAVE THE APPLAUSE FOR MY NEXT MOVE, GODDESS. I'M ABOUT TO TAKE YOUR KNIGHT!
I THINK NOT, JACOB. THE GAME IS NOT YET OVER!


THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns &
P Douglas
WHAT TWO-TIMING TRICK IS THIS, ZETA? I THOUGHT YOU SET SUSANNE AND ME FREE?
AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER?
YOUR PARTNER HAS BEEN RETURNED TO YOUR OWN TIME. SHE WAS OF NO USE TO ME
BUT YOU I HAVE PLANS FOR, LOVER!
T277

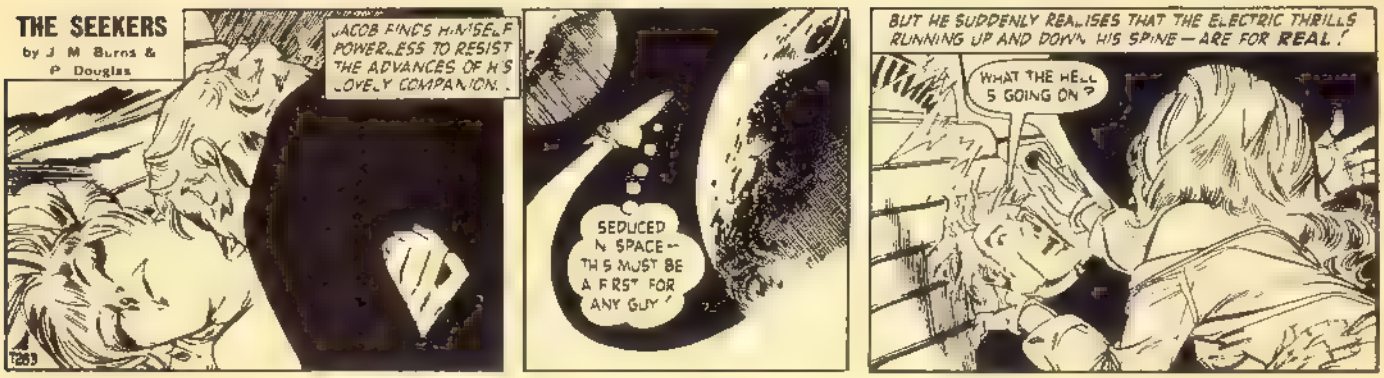
THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns &
P Douglas
JACOB IS RELEASED FROM THE TIME TANK TO MEET HIS FATE.
I MUST, AS THEY SAY, LOVE YOU AND LEAVE YOU
...BECAUSE YOU ARE GOING ON A ONE-WAY TRIP!
T278

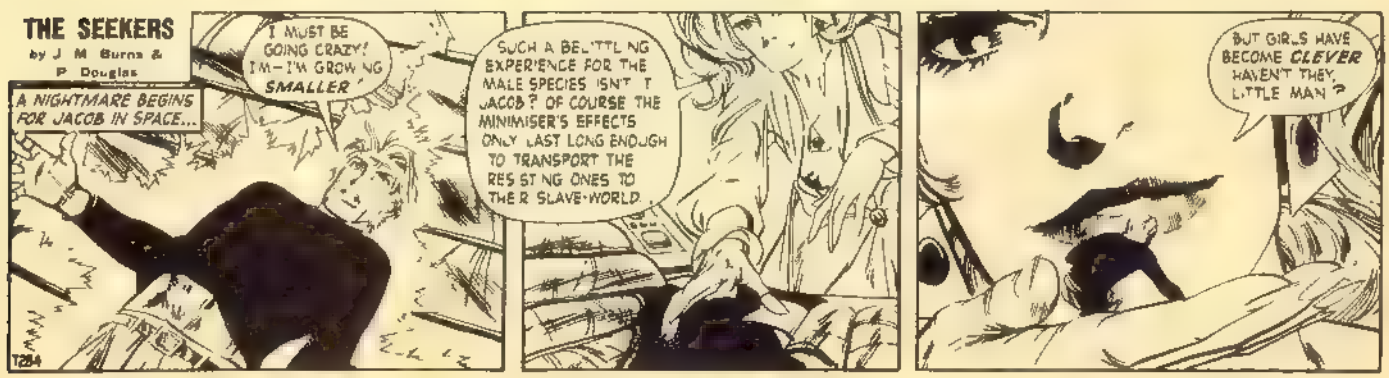
THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns &
P Douglas
NICE OF YOU TO COME AND SEE ME OFF, YOUR LOVELINESS...
BUT IF I'M TO BE DEPORTED FROM YOUR WORLD OF GORGEOUS GIRLIES, YOU WON'T BLAME ME WANTING TO TAKE A LITTLE SOUVENIR WITH ME TO WHEREVER THE HELL I'M GOING?
WHAT HAD YOU IN MIND?
YOU, GODDESS!
T279


THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns &
P Douglas
THE SPACESHIP WITH JACOB AND ZETA ABOARD, BLASTS OFF.
FOR SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN HI-JACKED TO SHARE THE SAME FATE THAT AWAITS ME OUT THERE IN SPACE YOU'RE PLAYING IT PRETTY COOL ZETA!
DID YOU EXPECT ME TO SCREAM?
I THINK I'M GOING TO ENJOY THE GRANDSTAND VIEW OF YOU, JACOB, BEING DISPATCHED TO A MEN-ONLY WORLD!
T280


THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
SEVEN MOONS JACOB — BUT ONLY ONE IS REAL!
T281
YOU... YOU MEAN THOSE OTHERS ARE MAN-MADE?
WOMAN-MADE. SATELLITE WORLDS BUILT BY MY SEX UPON WHICH ALL MEN HAVE BEEN CONDEMNED TO A LIFE OF EXILE.
WORKING AS SLAVES — AS HERE ON LUNA! — YOUR DESTINATION, JACOB!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
SO, ZETA, YOU'VE EXILED ALL THE BLOKES OF YOUR WORLD UP ON THESE ARTIFICIAL MOONS OF YOURS, TO SPEND THE REST OF THEIR NATURAL AS SLAVES. POOR BLIGHTERS!
T282
YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY FROM THE SILLY BITCHES WHO BURNED THEIR BRAS, HAVEN'T YOU, ZETA?
HOW DID YOU WORK IT — WIN THE BATTLE OF THE SEXES?
THAT'S AS THEY SAY A TRADE SECRET JACOB. BUT I'LL GIVE YOU A SAMPLE .. COME AND KISS ME!


THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
JACOB FINDS HIMSELF POWERLESS TO RESIST THE ADVANCES OF HIS LOVELY COMPANION..
T283
SEDUCED IN SPACE — THIS MUST BE A FIRST FOR ANY GUY!
BUT HE SUDDENLY REALISES THAT THE ELECTRIC THRILLS RUNNING UP AND DOWN HIS SPINE — ARE FOR REAL!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?


THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
A NIGHTMARE BEGINS FOR JACOB IN SPACE...
I MUST BE GOING CRAZY! I'M — I'M GROWING SMALLER!
T284
SUCH A BEWILDERING EXPERIENCE FOR THE MALE SPECIES ISN'T IT JACOB? OF COURSE THE MINIMISER'S EFFECTS ONLY LAST LONG ENOUGH TO TRANSPORT THE RESISTING ONES TO THEIR SLAVE-WORLD.
BUT GIRLS HAVE BECOME CLEVER HAVEN'T THEY, LITTLE MAN?

continued

Contd. from page 8

CM: Between when you started Hawke and now, has the character changed much?

SJ: Yes. He's still a bit of a father image. Mac is really the character who is the common man. Hawke is just a little austere, I try to make him human and he's got into tussles with the girlies, you know. It is a well known fact that comic characters don't really age very much, they remain in this kind of limbo-land. I think he has matured. Let me say this, in drawing him there is no question now that he dictates his character such as it is, that's pretty one-dimensional. But there are certain things you know he wouldn't say, I mean if someone else has to write a script for me I know that halfway through that script I would come to the conclusion that they simply weren't getting at what this guy's all about. Hawke has unbent over the years I think, he's become more of a real person. Mac, of course, was based on Charles C. Charles in "Terry and the Pirates", there has to be somebody to fill in the bits that the big man can't say. The strip is very firmly placed now with one foot in science fact and the other in science fiction. People often say to me, "Oh, now that they've landed on the Moon the times are outstripping you." But the whole point is, that you know as well as I do, that if the King of Mars came down tomorrow and paraded up and down Hyde Park he would be a nine-day wonder. People wouldn't make anything of it after a while, and the fact of the matter is that right at this moment there are three guys up there circling the Earth, now when Gargarin did it - earthshattering! These three guys are up there eating their dinners, reading the paper, which is a lot more remarkable really. When one looks at reality and looks at the Universe and the more that one hears about research into things like black holes, other dimensions and gravitational energy, there is no doubt that you could drum your brains out for your life and you could never ever touch on anything that could be said to be "impossible" - including making the dead walk! The Universe is just like a great toy and we're a little part of it doing little things with it. But there's no question that man will live in space, there's no question about it, it's happening now in a small way with Skylab. In fact, just by accident, I did predict, within about a week, the landing on the Moon ten years before it happened. In one of the strips I had a plaque (it was very much nicer that President Nixon's!) on a rock and the plaque read, "At this spot the first living creature landed on the Moon, August 2nd A.D.1969. His name was Homo Sapien". And I'd forgotten all about that until two people wrote in when the Americans landed on the Moon and said, "did not Sydney Jordan predict..." Now what made me able to do that was an understanding of technology, I understand how it works because I was trained for that, but also the belief that it would only take another 9 or 10 years based on the fact that there is really nothing that man can't do. One of the NASA boys has said that they will stop short of nothing short of the throne of God Himself ! And I think that that is true, I don't think there is a mystery that wewon't solve, there may be an ultimate, final mystery but the mysteries that we regard as mysteries now will definitely fall to man, there's no question. But the extraordinary thing is that when man embarks on each adventure after a few weeks it becomes matter of fact. The very fact that human beings can accept that this is happening shows that we are fit for anything.

CM: So if we run out of oil we have atomic powered cars?

SJ: Well, the guy said, you know, if we want wood we cut down a tree, if we want oil we drill a hole, and if we want coal we dig a hole in the ground and pull it out. When we run out of all things then we all see how good we really are. But we will be good, we will be able to do it. I'm quite certain that some day there'll be people who live in space who will never want to come back. Space will be their life, because I think it's true to say that the people who first set foot on the moon all three of them suffered a very big mental reorientation. In fact, Buzz Aldrin has had a breakdown. Because I don't think you can stand on the moon and look back at the earth and see it for what it really is without your entire notion of who you are and what you are and what mankind is, suffering a very severe shock. Now the thing is about science fiction and artists and writers in the genre (and in comics) that these people are outgoing-they are not completely befuddled and stuck down by the material world around them. Their minds can spread and go out and look at things and imagine things. What you can imagine, somewhere in the universe is probably happening.

CM: Could you explain some of Hawke's supporting characters?

SJ: Maclean is Jeff Hawke's sidekick. He's really a foil to Hawke. He's a Canadian and he can say things like "yeah" and "include me out" and all these jokey things, but of course he's a man of steel and utterly reliable. One could almost be accused of setting up a kind of homo-sexual thing, I mean the relationship between two men, you have to suspend this belief a little, I mean they wouldn't be jumping in and out of each other's flats every five minutes. And I've always tried to give the impression that Mac's after the ladies and Jeff is kind of standoffish but now the reverse is true, Jeff gets the girls and Mac is left standing on his hands I suppose.

CM: Is this anything like the Digby/Dan Dare relationship in "Eagle" ?

SJ: Well "Dan Dare" was based on the traditional Sancho Ponza/Don Quixote thing, this is all it is, it's an old theme. In the case of Digby, he was so down to earth. I think the difference there was that Dan Dare and Digby had an relationship rather like 'the young master and Jeeves' but in my case Mac is also a commander in the space force and he's really more of an oppo rather than an underling. I don't bring many subsidiary characters in as long-term characters. Willy had a fellow called Lorky who was one of the curators of the British Museum, a bit of an archaeologist and a bit of a science bug , he was quite a good character because he represented the 'bookish' side of things. Jeff and company would go to him for advice. But I tend to let my characters arise from the story.

CM: And there were those two characters that appeared at the beginnings and ends of each story.....

SJ: Well that was a little thing that we introduced. Willy used to think that I was a little troll and he was Mephisto - he liked that idea, and we used to appear like that to introduce and close each story. What I've been doing now, a little bit hedonistic, I've been putting myself in the strip, at the beginning of each story to explain because I didn't really think it was fair to carry on with Willy's little idea. It's just a way of breaking the thing up you know. I mean, I am a storyteller, that's what I am. If I'd been doing this in the 15th century I probably would've been a playwright or an artist of some kind, I don't know, but that's my game. I build the strip, you see, it seems disorganised and I often have the strip editor tearing his hair but he knows at the end of it all that I did have a theme and I do stick to it; I may diverse from it a little bit but I do come back to it. I think it makes for a new lively, organic strip. It can get a little confusing and sometimes one gets into a corner but there's always a way out. When I get an idea for a story I then set it into some kind of time, Hawke is currently set in about 1996, I think of what will be happening then, I think of people's reactions, of course I have to base that on the reactions of people now, but basically, I then say how would these people react to this situation? Now in one of my stories there's this alien going to sell the world. The creature up in space who actually owns the world, is fed up with the mess we're making of it and he wants to sell it. So what does he do, he goes and gets an estate agent. So enter this wierd-frog-like chap

who is a sort of 'galactic estate agent'! And then by simply vulgarising what you know about estate agents and the state of markets the story builds itself. So I produced this impossible situation where these creatures can come and evict all the people from earth. There's nothing to stop them because their technology is so imense. Now who can you turn to? You can't bring God into it, that's not on, in fact I did mention that earlier in the story, I made it clear that for the creatures who were going to evict us from earth there was a higher power to which they had to concede, but within that we were here to fend for ourselves. So Pan was the obvious answer. Now how do you go about summoning Pan? You go to a magician, you go to a sorcerer, you go to someone who conjours up spirits. So out of the very nature of the problem inherent in the story comes the by-play and I'm sure that's the essence of story writing.

CM: I was wondering what Jeff Hawke's status has become how as opposed to when he started.

SJ: He used to be a Wing Commander. That seemed a high enough rank for him. Now he has kind of an overall brief. He's still a serviceman but he's almost like someone in the secret service, you know, these people you never hear much of, they're very very capable men, they've usually had an extremely expensive education, they can go anywhere - like James Bond in a way.

CM: How you would get over the fact that although he is a 'world saver' he has not become a powerful and widely-acclaimed public figure.

SJ: I've hinted at that for instance when this girl was coming to kill him in the last story, she found him fairly easily because when she scanned the world's newscasts, Hawke's name was mentioned because he wasging to lead the next expedition to Mars, he was quite a famous guy. Rather like Henry Kissinger, who, although in a very powerful position has managed to keep relatively out of the world's eye until recently.

CM: Is Hawke the kind of guy who would be a household name in his times?

SJ: Yes. A fellow masquerading as Hawke in one story was getting a lift into London from the country, the chap driving the car recognised him, that's just about the level of it. He's almost like a film star but he's a big-shot sort of spaceman-cum-troubleshooter. But don't forget that in 1996 the cult of the individual would almost have vanished. People will accept people like Hawke without all the big hero-worship bit. Nowadays the kids are all very very wary of 'drum-beating and things like that. The youth of today is much more synical about establishment heroes.

CM: Could you tell us a little bit more about Jeff Hawke's universe itself, as such?

SJ: Well, one is assuming a fairly stable state in the world where people aren't fighting any more - that the battle is with environment rather than enemies. I'm rather skated over the problems of long distance space travel because of course one has to think in terms of a very advanced technology to get anywhere in any kind of time. In some of my stories I have inferred that there are certain restrictions - you'll not find Jeff producing a ship on earth that can fly to Alpha Centauri. What usually happens, if I want to move him far away in the universe I have another agency do it for him. I'm assuming that man has reached out about as far as Jupiter, which is quite possible. That's as far as man can take himself but Jeff can be whipped away anywhere. Take the controversy about flying saucers - some people refuse to believe in them, whereas others like businessman and tycoon William Lear, of Lear Jet fame, are working on concepts suggested by the flying saucer possibility. If flying saucers have not yet landed, then I think they will, and if you speak to people who really study this and if you read magazines like "Space Flight" which is the British Interplanetary Society's magazine, you'll find people putting forward very interesting theories, proving with some conviction that it was possible for intelligent life to have passed near enough to our solar system to have made the jump. Whereas all artifacts and evidence will long have vanished from the face of our planet, in the thousands of years since their 'visit', it is my opinion that these same artifacts could still exist on our outer planets. Anything, for instance, that had been left on Pluto would still be there in some kind of recognisable shape after millions and millions of years. Even as near as our Moon - we've landed men on the moon but it's like landing someone in the middle of Salisbury Plain and saying that they had surveyed the earth - the moon is a helluva big place! I don't think that any thinking person is in very much doubt that there are intelligent beings somewhere else in the universe.

CM: Have you read Eric von Daniken's Chariot of the Gods?

SJ: Yes, now this is an example of a guy who has made a lot of money out of old hat. He has simply popularised what has been known for many years. But a lot of what he says is quite true. Talking again about Hawke's universe, the thing which I find very strange is the way which people accept the daylight, we're sitting in here in beautiful sunlight but whenever the night comes we look up - how exposed we are. We're all climbing around the outside of this great ball and out there is nothing between us and Alpha Centauri. It's an incredible thought but we accept this because we've been brought up to it. But beings that have been brought up on an 'inside' world would find the outside to be terrifyingly vertiginous. We do accept wonders and we keep looking for more. I think that science fiction and science fiction comic strips are really never ending. There'll be guys drawing S.F. when I am dead and gone and so are you!

CM: The art on "Jeff Hawke" seems to have gone through three distinct phases. In the beginning the art seemed to be - very 'IPC-ish'. In the next stage it seems to be very black and white, and more recently you've been using zip-a-tone to a very great extent. Why did you bring in the last change?

SJ: Well, I have always used tints. I'm one of the few people in this country who uses zip-a-tone. Plenty of people can draw in a very classic way in black and white with the pen as Jim Holdaway did, without making any invidious comparison, because Jim Holdaway was a master. So there's no percentage in being just another good liner, because I have a sneaking suspicion that a lot of people are better at it than I am because they've been more disciplined as artists. Now I have always been more conscious of the atmosphere which lies between whatever you are looking at and you; there is atmosphere, there is haze, there is light, there is random light. It's the difference between plucking out a tune on a guitar with a single string and playing chords to it. Now I think that someone like Jim Holdaway was playing all the notes and I'm playing chords, if that makes any sense to you. I'm trying to get a broad impression, falling short of photographic reality but also not going into the mechanical business of producing tone by a shading with lines. The tints are so varied and flexible now that one put layers of tint on and scrape the stuff off and get effects you see. I'm doing something now about a comet coming and it's marvelous for that kind of thing. It cuts a lot of work out and I think it reproduces better too, it'll print as you put it down. In things like underwater scenes and a lot of the ghostly things I sometimes do, its invaluable. As I said, Ron Embleton once called me the 'master of the effect' and I think I'd like to be remembered as that - that's coming from a pretty good guy. I think I go for effect more than a sort of punctilious obsession with drawing in itself. I'm very fortunate, I draw much smaller than most of my contemporaries do but it does reproduce well in the paper. In fact a lot of my stuff is probably quite disappointing in it's actual size but in the paper it does seem to reproduce in a legible way.

CM: Yes, you do find that so many originals look absolutely startling and when it comes into the paper there's nothing there.

SJ: I think this is the problem, getting back to this business of drawing for the medium, you see a newspaper is exclusive to itself, your drawing has to reproduce just as well on the first run as the last one. You're turning out say 4 million papers a day, the blocks are changed every so often, but at the end of each run the block begins to flatten and so you get a distortion and you get

A STRANGE EMERGENCY HAS ARISEN ON SPACE STATION ONE — AND JEFF HAWKE AND MAC MACLEAN ARRIVE HURRIEDLY BY CAPSULE FROM DARTMOOR BASE . . .
THE INVADERS
TAKE US STRAIGHT TO THE OBJECT!
THE STATION COMMANDER IS ALREADY AT IT, JEFF, WAITING FOR YOU!
AND SO . . .
HAS THERE BEEN ANY SIGN OF LIFE ABOARD SINCE YOU CAUGHT IT?
NONE, JEFF— BUT THE COMMANDER WILL BRING YOU UP TO DATE!
HAWKE JOINS THE STATION COMMANDER AT THE 'OBJECT'! . .
WHAT IS IT, HAWKE? THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW . . .
YOU SAY IT WASN'T IN ORBIT, BUT CAME OUT OF THE GREAT BEYOND?
STRAIGHT OUT OF PERSEUS, LIKE A METEOR— BUT AT LOW VELOCITY. WE GOT IT ON THE RADAR WHEN IT WAS STILL FAR OUT, AND MANAGED TO GO ALONGSIDE IN TIME— OR BY NOW IT WOULD BE A BURNT CINDER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PACIFIC!
JEFF INSPECTS . . .
WE CAN SEE IT'S A SHIP, COMMANDER BUT FROM WHERE?
IT MAY HAVE BEEN VOYAGING A MILLION YEARS . . . WITH NOTHING INSIDE BUT DUST . . .
CISION . . .
LET'S GET IT ABOARD, AND INTO THE WORKSHOP, COMMANDER! IT WOULD BE CRIMINAL TO OPEN THE HULL IN VACUUM. WHAT'S INSIDE MAY NOT BE DUST . . .
IF YOU AGREE THAT IT'S SAFE — ALL RIGHT!
AND SO THINGS MOVE ON TOWARDS ONE OF THE MOST FANTASTIC DISCOVERIES IN THE HISTORY OF EARTH!

Jeff Hawke
BY STANLEY JORDAN
ALIEN THE ALIEN SPEAKS IN A LANGUAGE UNKNOWN TO HAWKE
SUDDENLY
JEFF THIS IS MAC DO NOT TRY TO CONTACT THE ALIENS
THE SUDDEN BURST OF ENGLISH HAS A STARTLING EFFECT THE TINY CREATURE RECOILS IN TERROR!
WE'RE COMING BACK FOR YOU JEFF
AS HAWKE STOOPS TO CATCH HER
AT THE SOUND OF MAC'S VOICE THE TINY GIRL HURLS HERSELF FROM HAWKES HAND
TO TUMBLE SCREAMING IN THE NEAR ZERO GRAVITY
NTATRA!
JEFF WE MUST GET OUT OF THERE
AS THE TINY MAN STOOPS TOWARDS HIS COMPANION
WITH MAC'S VOICE RINGING IN HIS EARS HAWKE SEES THE SECOND ALIEN TOO LATE
A TWIN ENERGY BEAM FLINGS HIM BACK
JEFF WE'RE ON OUR WAY CAN YOU HEAR ME
THE GRILLED SWINGS BACK TOWARDS OBJECT X
AFFIRMATIVE MAC AND SO CAN THE ALIENS
JEFF! KEEP THEM OFF - WITH THE GRENADES IF NECESSARY

FROM 'HERE BE TYGERS' — 1972

filling in, and you have to think in terms of drawing exclusively for the newspaper as opposed to the comics in America which are done by flat bed presses. The "Eagle" was done by, I think, by photogravure where it did produce very faithfully all the time.

CM: Peter O'Donnell was talking very enthusiastically about a project for "Modesty Blaise" to become a Sunday strip, a three-banker, you know. Are there any plans of that type for "Jeff Hawke"?

SJ: Aye, I'd find it very difficult to do! The paper has toyed from time to time with Sunday strips and I did draw a sequence for a Sunday strip. I think that then you'd have to be talking about a good deal of money, I don't think I could keep up both ends of it. But a Sunday strip in colour would be marvellous to do, you could really expand it out, you could do complete stories in a couple of weeks. Looking back on Milton Caniff's stuff, each week's adventure really was a thing in itself even though it was continued the next week.

CM: So you don't have many other Jeff Hawke projects planned at the moment?

SJ: I find that if I diversify my activities in that way I think I would become 'diluted', there's just so much you can do. For instance. Suppose I started to write somebody else's science fiction strip, where am I going to be? I'll be using up ideas that I should be saving for Hawke.

CM: Have there ever been any plans for "Jeff Hawke" in any other parts of the media?

SJ: Yes, some people came to me from McMillan's, the publishers. They have a film section, and they in fact did a very good little five minute film of semi-animation. It was the sequence where the Sphinx comes down out of the sky and lands beside the Sphinx at Giza. It was very good, a very stylish one for them to do. They had a narrator with a mid-Atlantic accent which was good, they had the characters voiced-up; Mac was Canadian, Jeff was frightfully posh, and the girl and the bloke in the wheelchair. It looked well, but the animation was very simplified, there was no lip-sync or anything like that, but it had the makings. Quite honestly to do it in that form, animation, would cost too much money. We have had little nibbles from film people and I have a feeling that if my stuff were out in book form that might raise an eyebrow here or there, because I think that visually my stuff might make a very good film. One of the Willy Patterson stories which would film well is the one about the immortal toys where all the scarab beetles in the British Museum suddenly flew away. The trail leads to Burma where in this great cave lies a mummified child, the child of the Titans. He is buried in a great coffin and he's surrounded by his toys and instead of being a threat to the world he's rather a pathetic and sad little relic. When they go in there, Mac has a magneto which he is cranking and all the dolls get up and dance. You know, that could be just as horrific and frightening as any Hammer horror film.

CM: I think that Jeff Hawke is too realistic to be animated anyhow.

SJ: Yes, that's exactly it, you've hit it right on the head. Because I think it would be just as easy with the state of the special effects art now to put him into a live action film.

CM: Can we get on to the technology of your strip for a moment? In the latest ones that I have seen all the hardware is very accurate to today's standards. Are you in close contact with what NASA is doing?

SJ: Not so much NASA, but I read everything, of course, and the newspaper gets a great deal of information through its normal channels. And I do have a friend who was with me at Miles Aircraft who is a very great source of super-technical information. He's a structures man but he's been to McDonald-Douglas in the States working on the space shuttle and that kind of thing, so he's very knowledgeable and if I want any hard information I go to him. But I have a tremendous library of stuff and I'm very well versed in that. Then when I start getting super-technical Ramsey will say to me, "Now, the old ladies in Clackmannan will not understand what you are talking about!" So this is the brief, I have to be very careful, draw a very neat line between what people will be bored by and what is acceptable as a story.

CM: When Willy Patterson finished writing the strip was it then that you started getting other people to help you draw the strip while you concentrated more on writing? To what extent did other people help?

SJ: The kind of help I get now is marginal. Recently I've had some work done by

Martin Asbury. He does tend to draw rather like me, he's got a very good line, he draws girls very well, and he did help me out over a period of time when I was working on another story. It's not terribly fair on someone like Martin because it's not his, you know, and he's not really getting the kudos. I'm not saying that he could produce a facsimile "Jeff Hawke" because I don't think he could, I mean a kind of "Jef Hawke" indistinguishable from mine, and why should he? He ought to really be doing his own strip. But this is the big problem, if one were to delegate the work, and I don't think the paper would really care for that, they want me to draw the strip that's what it amounts to – they want the people they're hiring to do the work. And while they're quite happy where illness comes in to hire a substitute, I don't know what would happen if I suddenly decided to give it up, whether they would get someone else, I suppose they would and they could, but I think it would become something different just as "Modesty Blaise" is not the same as when Jim Holdaway was doing it.

CM: Has there been anyone apart from Martin?

SJ: Some years ago when I was in the course of preparing a weekly version which was never published, there was a sequence drawn by Colin Andrew (another Scot) who had worked with me in Dundee and had developed his original talent into a very strong line style with lots of cross hatching. His Jeff Hawke had the same atmospheric that I had striven for and was memorable for some super weirdies and a Maclean who had become like a cold and passionless god under their influence. More recently, Nick Faure has drawn occasionally for me because he works with me and we help one another and he's very good on likenesses and perhaps when I'm establishing a new character or something like that he'll do some work. After 20 years one tends to become just a little tired sometimes, one can't always come to the strip with the enthusiasm one would like to and I think that a helping hand can be valuable. Do many other people work in pairs?

CM: In England, as far as I know, there are very few people who do that but in the States it's done practically all the time. For example. Chic Young died fairly recently. He did "Blondie". He perhaps has been just 'overseeing' the strip for the last 25 years and somebody else had been drawing it. It is also well-known that for "Li'l Abner" Al Capp nowadays only draws the heads and faces and leaves his staff to fill in the rest of the strip.

SJ: When you're talking about those strips you're talking about something slightly different from the 'realistic' kind of comic strip because there one can almost do a Disney on it, it's almost animation. The characters are very broadly drawn, there's a very stylish way

Jeff Hawke
BY SYDNEY JORDAN
A DRAMATIC DISTURBANCE IN THE WATERS OF LOCH NESS
AND A MONSTROUS ORBY SHAPE SURFACES ALONGSIDE HAWKE
Jeff Hawke
BY SYDNEY JORDAN
LOCH NESS FOR A MEESS MOMENT SEABEAST AND HAWKE CONFRONT EACH THEO
THEN THE HEAD DESCENDS - AND THE GREAT JAWS OPEN WIDE
Jeff Hawke
BY SYDNEY JORDAN
AS HAWK FIRES THE CONCH GUN INTO THE GAPING JAWS OF THE MONSTER OF LOCH NESS
IT IS TIME FOLLOW US
AN ALIEN SHIP SIGNALS OFF THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND
Jeff Hawke
BY SYDNEY JORDAN
THE MONSTER DROOSY FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE DRUG DART IS FORKED INTO THE STOWAGE BAY OF THE ALIEN'S SAFARI SHIP
'IKE A NAUGHTY PUPPY WHO HAS RUN AWAY FROM ITS MASTER'

FROM 'SOMEDAY I'LL FIND YOU' — 1971

of doing them. But I would imagine that it was relatively easy for someone to imitate "Blondie" having studied it but look at the difficulty Prentice is having with the Alex Raymond strip "Rip Kirby". Apparently he was helping Raymond before Raymond was killed but his stuff is not the same, it's very competant but it's even more sterile, in a way, in terms of atmosphere, than Raymond's was. You see Raymond used to formalise things like buildings and trees, when you look at them now they were pretty jokey, there were just the bare bones of it. He really concentrated on his drawing, on his characterisation, his beautiful, accurate line. Prentice has done all that could possibly be done but it's not the same.

CM: Yes, and "Flash Gordon" is completely different now from what it was when Alex Raymond was doing it. In fact what I have noticed is that "Flash Gordon" has changed completely from its original style to become much more of a "Jeff Hawke" – type character!

SJ: I think in fairness to "Flash Gordon", I did originally base my character on "Flash Gordon" rather foolishly I suppose. The comic world, however, is full of fair-headed lads with wavy hair falling over their foreheads, it's almost a cypher. I've tried to make my character a little more trendy, his hair has got longer and he's become rather less 1930's I think, he had a very short haircut to begin with. When they (Americans) landed on the Moon, Thomas Payne said, "this is a victory for the guys with slide rules and short haircuts" and when I started Jeff Hawke, the clean-cut college boy, the Ivy League, all that sort of thing was in vogue, the Englishman of course always had short back and sides because they'd all just come out of the guards. So this is one area where I can modify Hawke. I've kept Mac with a short haircut because he's a Canadian. I've a very good Canadian friend who works for Reuters who is still very much like that – with a crew-cut, very dapper, wears button-down shirts, very immaculate, very bright guy, I mean you don't have to be trendy to be bright!

CM: You mentioned earlier about a character like Mr. Spock.

SJ: I must say that when I saw "Star Trek" Mr Spock was very like the two Martian characters that I created many years ago, about 1955-56. Now these two Martians were completely emotionless, they had the power of telepathy and thought transference, and they were very imperturbable, logical, and indeed they had long hair before the Beatles did! They had hair rather like Prince Valiant and gold coloured eyes from Ray Bradbury's "Martians" and they were just Mr. Spock to a T. I suppose I in my turn got that from somebody else. There is another coincidence. Arthur C. Clarke has just brought out a new book called "Rendezvous with Rama", about this spaceship that was so large that many people could live inside it with fields, mountains, cities, etc. It was so big that the land curved inwards concavely and the water was held in check, it had weather and everything - all inside the ship. About 15 years ago I did a story about a thing called "The World of Ram" and it was exactly that - the people were living inside a ship with clouds and houses and trees and all that sort of thing. They ran into trouble because the outer part of the ship was contra-terrine matter, and the point was how to get them out of the ship without killing everybody. Now that was a very strange coincidence. Did Arthur Clarke have that subliminally on his mind somewhere? Incidentally, the broad synopsis of this story was written for me by Harry Harrison.

CM: This also sounds very much like the new Canadian sf TV series, "The Starlost", which was reported in length in Comic Media Newsletter 9. This too features a massive spaceship with thousands of people living aboard it. By the way, who are your favourite science fiction authors?

SJ: Well, my first introduction to sf was Ray Bradbury's "The Silver Locust" and he is still my favourite writer. Bradbury assumes that certain things are taken for granted and I admire his capacity for ignoring the 'nuts and bolts' aspects of things without any loss of believability. Robert Sheckley is another writer I like.

CM: What about the "big three", Heinlein, Asimov and Clarke?

SJ: I don't read too much of their stuff as I find long novels very difficult to enjoy, perhaps it's because I am a short story addict and this is the type of story I write for Hawke. One doesn't go in for 'novels' with a comic strip. I did start reading Herbert's "Dune" but got a bit bogged down in it and still haven't finished it. Don't get me wrong, I think it's an excellent story with some superb ideas. Talking of Arthur C. Clarke, there is an example of a science fiction writer who bases nearly all his surprises and little turnabouts directly from his incredible knowledge of the physical state of things. He does tend to go in for very scientific resolutions. It always has to do with what in fact would actually happen, he has a marvelous imagination in terms of the universe as it works, as it operates. Now, I try to do this up to a point but I have to bring in genuine fantasy from time to time because I think the other things is an art in itself.

CM: How do you split up your fantasy and your more technology-orientated subjects? I've recently been reading your adventure with the radioactive cloud in the "Men-omones Falls Gazette", now this is very straight scientific stuff based on fact but you've just been telling us of your story where this creature was trying to sell Earth. Do you mix them up or is there any set pattern?

SJ: Yes. In fact, I think I'm probably going more to fantasy proper rather than science fantasy, I mean that kind of science fantasy you've mentioned because I think it's easier to be more exciting. When you're dealing with mechanical troubles it can be rather limiting. I like to produce circumstances in the stories due to the nature of material things, to bring the characters together or whatnot.

CM: In the world of technology only technical faults can occur in things and you can't have any BEM's (bug-eyed monsters) lurking around in the background.

SJ: That's right, you can't do that. If I may blow my own trumpet for a bit (as if I haven't been doing that up to now !), I think I've tried some fairly daring things, For example, the thing where Hawke sees the Mona Lisa on the Moon - now that was pretty far out ! That worked out incredibly well by simply accepting that the elemental that inspired Leonardo to paint in the way he did is still around. You know Leda and the swan - this creature was his Leda and she was all things to all men. I mean Hawke comes round this corner and there is the Mona Lisa on the Moon !

CM: It sounds like "2001 '

SJ: Yes, a little bit like that. Well, in that case I believe Kubrick and Clarke had a great argument as to how the aliens were to be shown and how it was going to develop. Kubrick, being the artist, very wisely skated round being too obvious with his BEMs, you saw some diamond shapes flashing along when the bloke was having his trip and that was about all you saw. But you heard them when he landed in the room, you heard them oohing and ahhing and that was enough.

CM: Getting back to Jeff Hawke, I was wondering how long it took you to create a story. If it's a 14 week story how long does it take you to complete it?

SJ: In the way I work I don't think one can really divide the story from drawing and it takes me a great deal of time, let's put it that way. I'm not a quick worker. I find it very difficult to really have any free time. Now that might seem strange that three little pictures a day can be so irksome. Sometimes it gets down to only doing three pictures a day because I get a hang up with something else. The story-line only slows me up very occasionally, I find the drawing very hard work, I don't know why. Certain things I do easily but the sheer business of sitting down at that empty little white piece of paper is a bit off putting sometimes. I'm sure all my contemporaries think the same because I think when you have done it for so long and you get reaction and you're successful, I think one's natural instinct then is to think why not films? Why aren't you making films? Of course that's a bit niave because making a film is a vastly complex business and you're up against many more temperaments. The whole thing about being a comic strip artist is that one is a very solitary person. You stand or fall by your own standards. People can come and give you advice or your editor can accuse you of 'swinging the cat' and not putting your all into the strip. I think that in that regard one is very lonely and one fails every day because I don't think there are very many creative people who are happy with their work the morning after. It seems to be that unless one is silly or too arrogant for words, you always look back on the job and think, "I could have done that so much better". I must say that one is led through the story and there are little highlights and you know there is something good coming up, and you're terribly interested and think, that's going to look great ! And as I walk about with my dog I think, now what I'll do is this.....and the chap will do this..... and so and so....., and I do and then time is pressing and I make compromises, naturally - you have to with only three panels a day - three pictures. I'm not on the 6,006th strip at the moment, that's 18,000 drawings - where do they come from? One can get jaded.

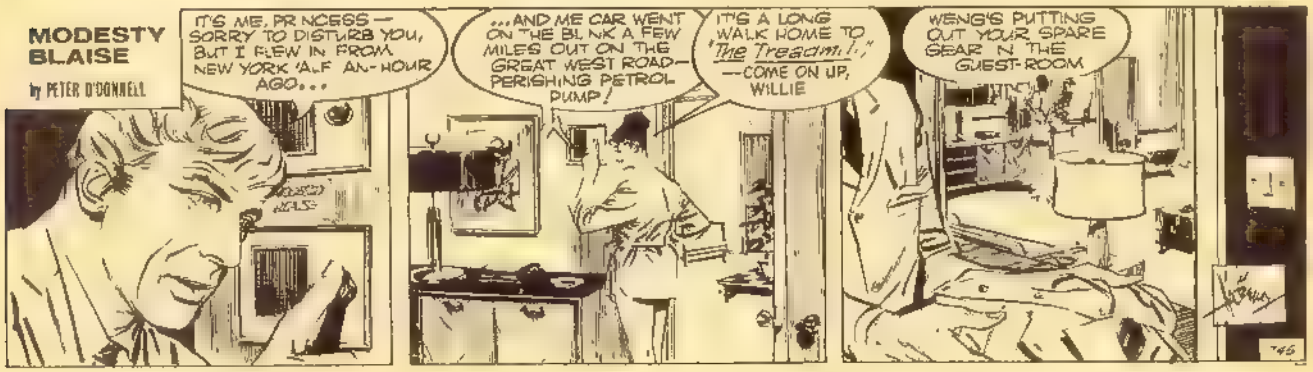
CM: I suppose you sometimes wish that you could turn the strip over to somebody else?

SJ: Let me put it this way. If I won the football pools tomorrow and became a very rich man would I continue to draw the strip? I don't know. I have a tremendous obligation to the paper, I feel a tremendous obligation to the Daily Express. Not out of any patronising sense but simply because they 'wore' me, they let me go on and learn my trade at their expense. They really did allow me to produce some pretty inferior work drawing-wise until I found my feet. I would never take Hawke away to some other paper, even if I could do that, because although I never see the hierarchy, at least never see them in any regular way, I must say that I do feel tremendous attachment to the paper, I think I've

contd. on page 40

MODESTY BLAISE

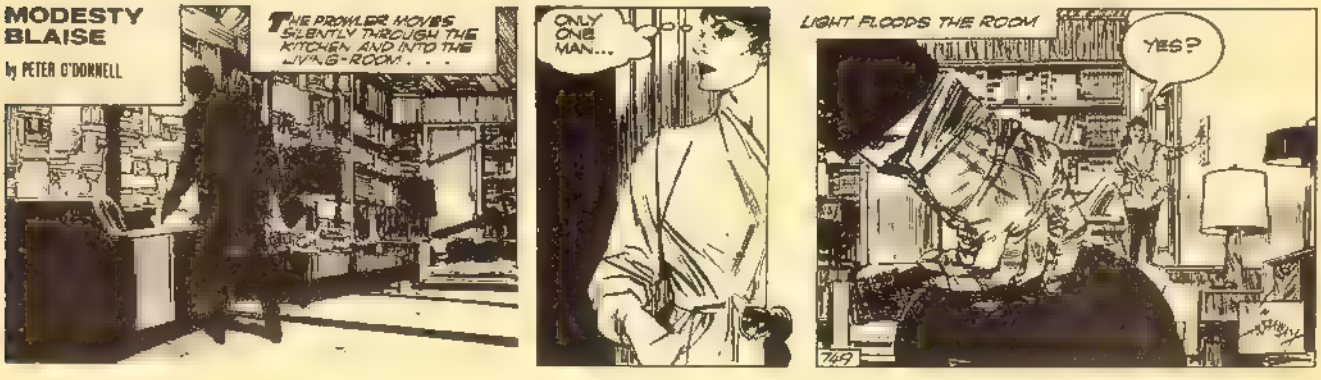
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
TOP TRAITOR
TOWARDS MIDNIGHT, ON THE TERRACE OF MODESTY'S PENT HOUSE
HALLO, WENG... HAVE A GOOD EVENING?
YES, THANK YOU, MISS B.A.SE— IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WISH?
I'M NOT SURE... THAT LOOKS LIKE MR GARVIN GETTING OUT OF A CAB—YES, YOU'D BETTER SEE THAT THE SPARE ROOM'S READY
744

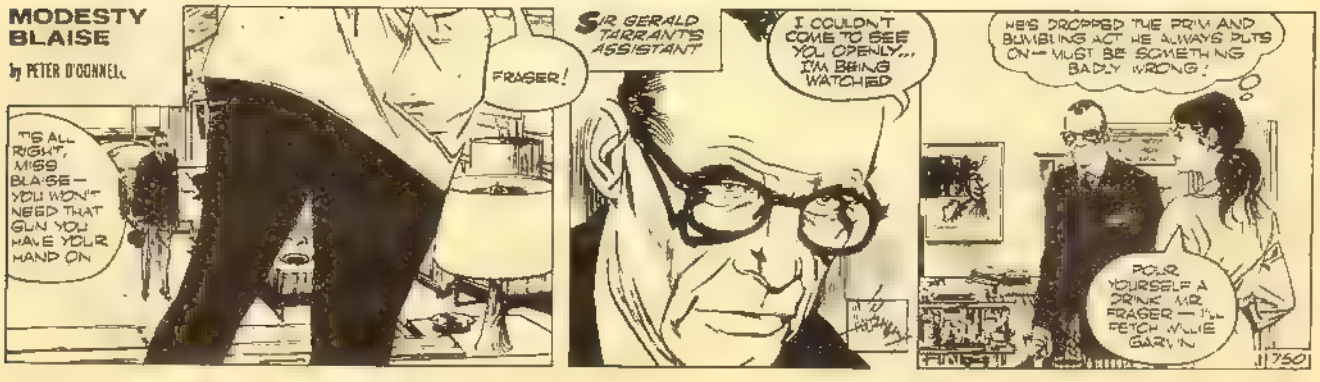

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IT'S ME, PRINCESS — SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, BUT I FLEW IN FROM NEW YORK 'ALF AN-HOUR AGO...
...AND ME CAR WENT ON THE BLINK A FEW MILES OUT ON THE GREAT WEST ROAD— PERISHING PETROL PUMP!
IT'S A LONG WALK HOME TO 'The Treacml.',, —COME ON UP, WILLIE
WENG'S PUTTING OUT YOUR SPARE GEAR IN THE GUEST-ROOM
746

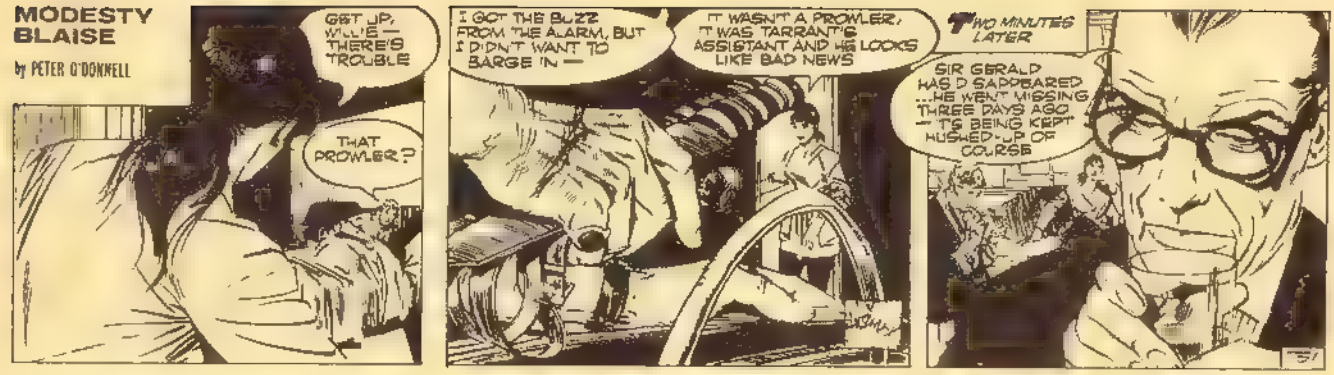
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SORRY TO DUMP MESELF ON YOU SO LATE PRINCESS — YOU SURE I'M NOT IN THE WAY?
QUITE SURE WILLIE... MR. BACH AND I ARE JUST GOOD FRIENDS
FUGUE IN E FLAT, EH? SOME KIDDY, THAT BACH— TALKED PURE MATHEMATICS WITH MUSIC
OH, I PICKED UP A LITTLE PRESENT FOR YOU IN NEW YORK, PRINCESS
I'M ALWAYS TELLING YOU NOT TO— BUT I EVEN SOUND UNCONVINCING TO MYSELF.
746

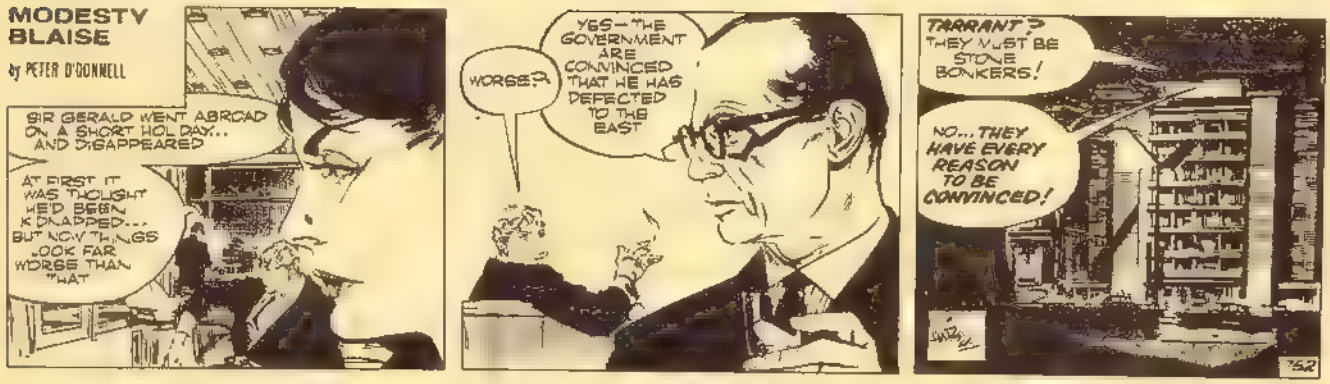
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MODESTY UNWRAPS HER PRESENT
OH, WILLIE LOVE, THANK YOU—IT'S BEAUTIFUL! A DERRINGER... A .47 WILLIAMSON, ISN'T IT? AND WITH CHASED GOLD BUTT-PLATES!
MADE ABOUT 1870—NO GOOD TO YOU FOR BUSINESS OF COURSE
BUT THE MAGAZINES SAY GIRLS NEVER LIKE PRACTICAL PRESENTS—THEY GO FOR SOMETHING SORT OF, YOU KNOW...
EXPENSIVE AND UNIQUE—LIKE AN ANTIQUE GOLD-PLATED DERRINGER
MR. GARVIN'S ROOM IS READY NOW, MISS BLAISE
THANK YOU, WENG. YOU GET TO BED NOW—WE'LL BE TURNING IN AS SOON AS WE'VE HAD A NIGHT-CAP
747

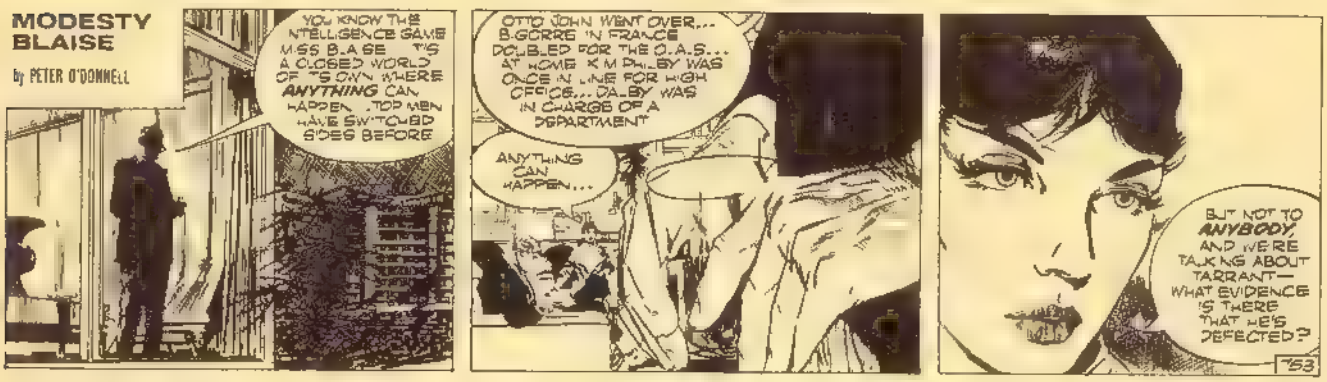
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AT TWO A.M., ON THE SERVICE STAIRS LEADING TO MODESTY'S KITCHEN...
KITCHEN DOOR...
HULLO...! SOMEONE ON THE PROWL
AN ALARM BUZZES SOFTLY IN BOTH MODESTY'S BEDROOM AND WILLIE'S
THE GUEST HERE WILL BE BOY—MORE POLITE TO LET MODESTY DEAL WITH THE POOR PERISHER
748

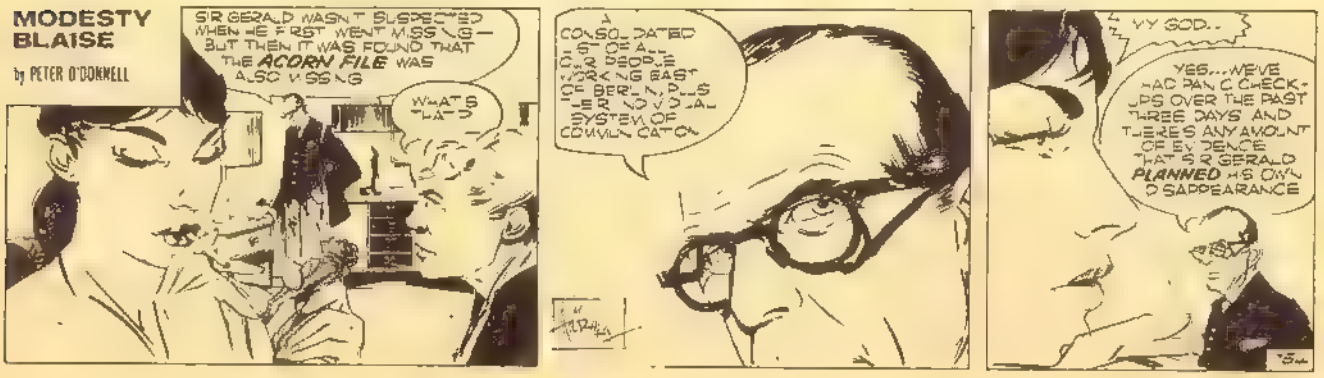

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE PROWLER MOVES SILENTLY THROUGH THE KITCHEN AND INTO THE LIVING-ROOM...
ONLY ONE MAN...
LIGHT FLOODS THE ROOM
YES?
749

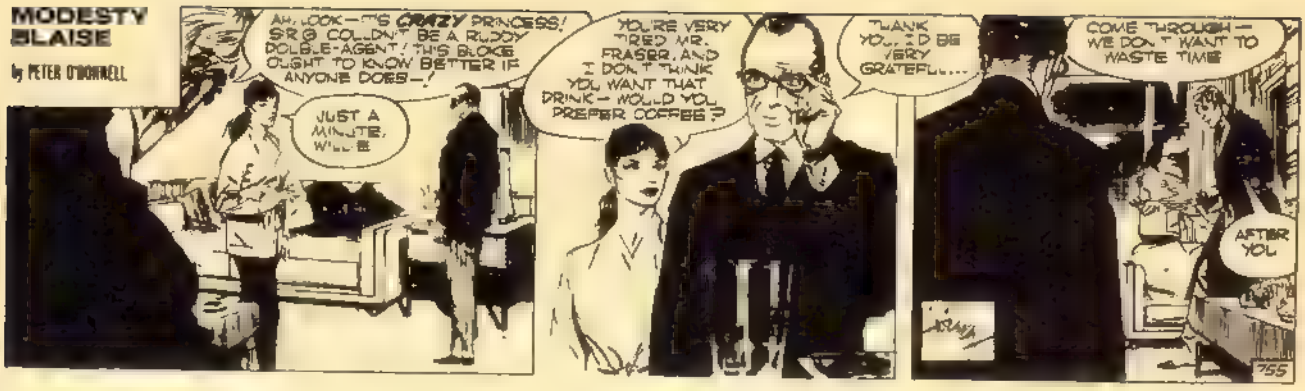

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
FRASER!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MISS BLAISE—YOU WON'T NEED THAT GUN YOU HAVE YOUR HAND ON
SIR GERALD TARRANT'S ASSISTANT
I COULDN'T COME TO SEE YOU OPENLY... I'M BEING WATCHED
HE'S DROPPED THE PRIM AND BUMBLING ACT HE ALWAYS PUTS ON—MUST BE SOMETHING BADLY WRONG!
POUR YOURSELF A DRINK MR. FRASER—I'LL FETCH WILLIE GARVIN
750

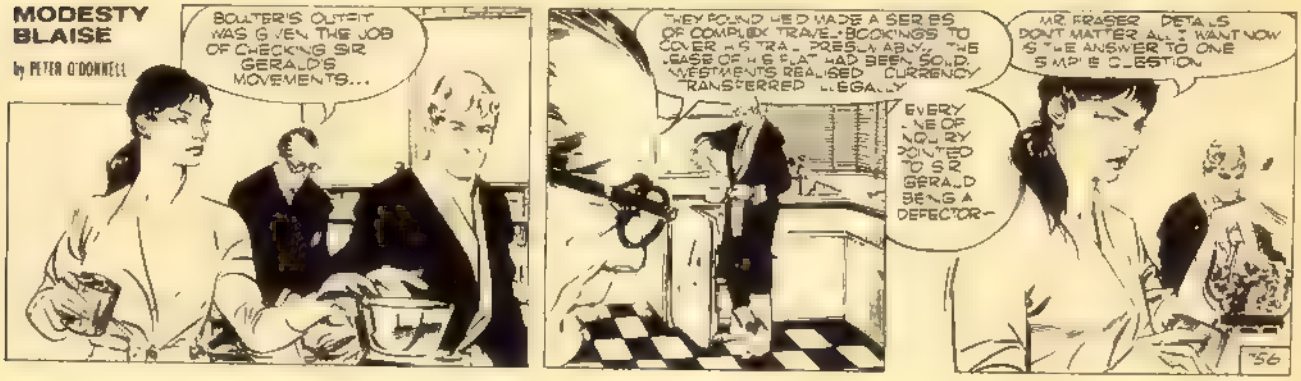

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
GET UP, WILLIE— THERE'S TROUBLE
THAT PROWLER?
I GOT THE BUZZ FROM THE ALARM, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO BARGE IN —
IT WASN'T A PROWLER, IT WAS TARRANT'S ASSISTANT AND HE LOOKS LIKE BAD NEWS
TWO MINUTES LATER
SIR GERALD HAS D SAPPEARED ...HE WENT MISSING THREE DAYS AGO — IT'S BEING KEPT HUSHED-UP OF COURSE
51


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SIR GERALD WENT ABROAD ON A SHORT HOLIDAY... AND DISAPPEARED
AT FIRST IT WAS THOUGHT HE'D BEEN KIDNAPPED... BUT NOW THINGS LOOK FAR WORSE THAN THAT
WORSE?
YES — THE GOVERNMENT ARE CONVINCED THAT HE HAS DEFECTED TO THE EAST
TARRANT? THEY MUST BE STONE BONKERS!
NO... THEY HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE CONVINCED!
52

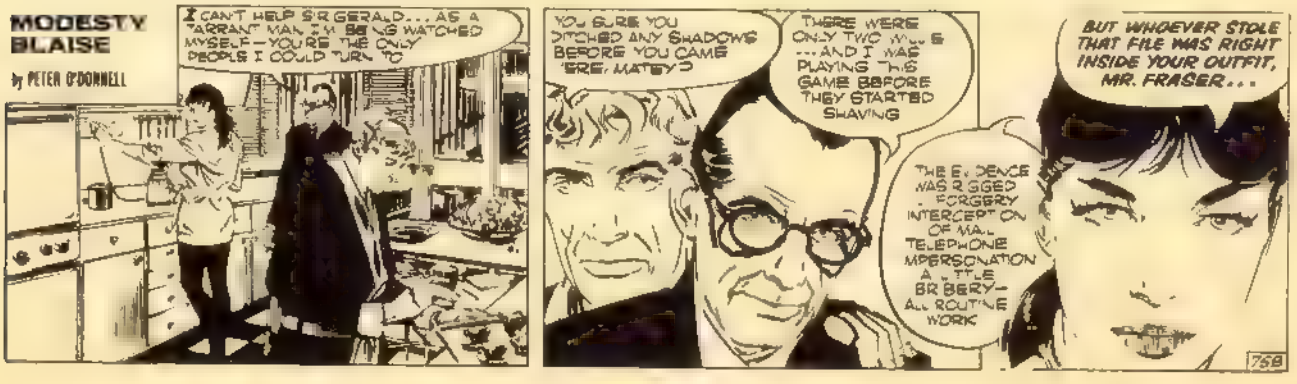

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
YOU KNOW THE INTELLIGENCE GAME MISS BLAISE — IT'S A CLOSED WORLD OF ITS OWN WHERE ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN. TOP MEN HAVE SWITCHED SIDES BEFORE
OTTO JOHN WENT OVER... BEGORRE IN FRANCE DOUBLED FOR THE O.A.S... AT HOME KIM PHILBY WAS ONCE IN LINE FOR HIGH OFFICE... DALBY WAS IN CHARGE OF A DEPARTMENT
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN...
BUT NOT TO ANYBODY, AND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TARRANT — WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE THAT HE'S DEFECTED?
53

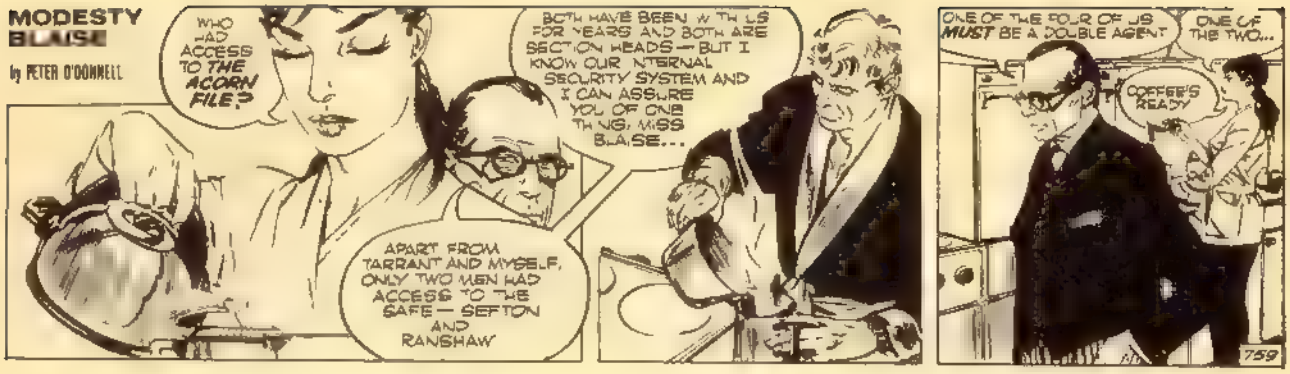

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SIR GERALD WASN'T SUSPECTED WHEN HE FIRST WENT MISSING — BUT THEN IT WAS FOUND THAT THE ACORN FILE WAS ALSO MISSING
WHAT'S THAT?
A CONSOLIDATED LIST OF ALL OUR PEOPLE WORKING EAST OF BERLIN, PLUS THEIR INDIVIDUAL SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION
MY GOD..
YES... WE'VE HAD PANIC CHECK-UPS OVER THE PAST THREE DAYS AND THERE'S ANY AMOUNT OF EVIDENCE THAT SIR GERALD PLANNED HIS OWN DISAPPEARANCE
54

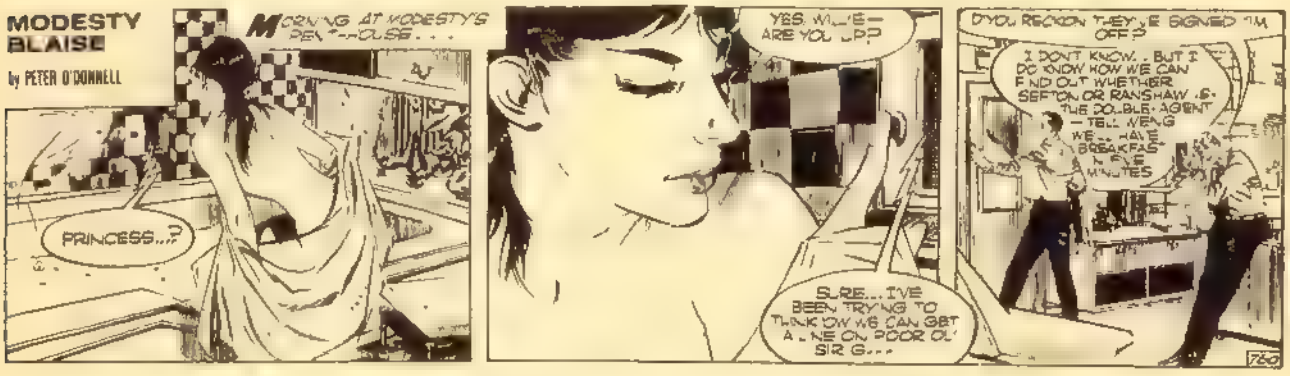

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AH, LOOK—IT'S CRAZY PRINCESS! SHE COULDN'T BE A RUDDY DOUBLE-AGENT! THIS BLOKE OUGHT TO KNOW BETTER IF ANYONE DOES—!
JUST A MINUTE, WILLIE
YOU'RE VERY TIRED MR. FRASER, AND I DON'T THINK YOU WANT THAT DRINK—WOULD YOU PREFER COFFEE?
THANK YOU... I'D BE VERY GRATEFUL...
COME THROUGH—WE DON'T WANT TO WASTE TIME
AFTER YOU
755


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
BOULTER'S OUTFIT WAS GIVEN THE JOB OF CHECKING SIR GERALD'S MOVEMENTS...
THEY FOUND HE'D MADE A SERIES OF COMPLEX TRAVEL-BOOKINGS TO COVER HIS TRAIL. PRESUMABLY THE CASE OF HIS FLAT HAD BEEN SOLD. INVESTMENTS REALISED CURRENCY TRANSFERRED ILLEGALLY
EVERY LINE OF INQUIRY POINTED TO SIR GERALD BEING A DEFECTOR—
MR. FRASER DETAILS DON'T MATTER ALL I WANT NOW IS THE ANSWER TO ONE SIMPLE QUESTION
756

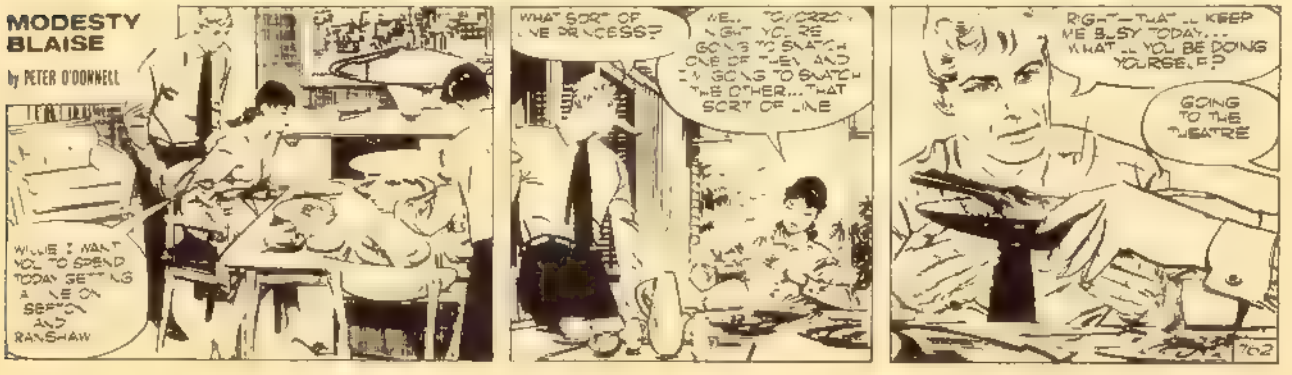
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WITH ALL THE WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE, MR FRASER, DO YOU BELIEVE SIR GERALD TARRANT IS A TRAITOR?
YOU KNOW... I WORKED FOR HIM AS AN AGENT IN THE FIELD FOR FIFTEEN YEARS...
...UNTIL HE BROUGHT ME HOME AND PUT ME BEHIND A DESK WHERE I'VE WORKED RIGHT BESIDE HIM FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS—I THINK I KNOW HIM BETTER THAN ANY MAN
SO I'M NOT OFFERING AN OPINION MISS BLAISE—I'M TELLING YOU HE'S BEEN FRAMED
IF YOU THOUGHT ANYTHING ELSE, YOU WOULDN'T BE AMONG FRIENDS, MR FRASER
757

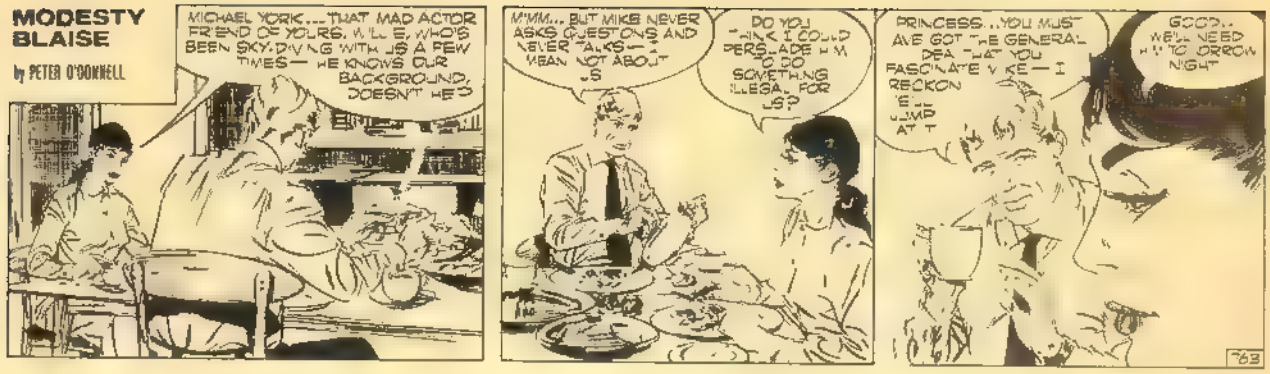

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I CAN'T HELP SIR GERALD... AS A TARRANT MAN I'M BEING WATCHED MYSELF—YOU'RE THE ONLY PEOPLE I COULD TURN TO
YOU'RE SURE YOU DITCHED ANY SHADOWS BEFORE YOU CAME 'ERE, MATEY?
THERE WERE ONLY TWO MEN ...AND I WAS PLAYING THIS GAME BEFORE THEY STARTED SHAVING
THE EVIDENCE WAS RIGGED—FORGERY INTERCEPTION OF MAIL TELEPHONE IMPERSONATION A LITTLE BRIBERY—ALL ROUTINE WORK
BUT WHOEVER STOLE THAT FILE WAS RIGHT INSIDE YOUR OUTFIT, MR. FRASER...
758


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WHO HAD ACCESS TO THE ACORN FILE?
APART FROM TARRANT AND MYSELF, ONLY TWO MEN HAD ACCESS TO THE SAFE — SEFTON AND RANSHAW
BOTH HAVE BEEN WITH US FOR YEARS AND BOTH ARE SECTION HEADS — BUT I KNOW OUR INTERNAL SECURITY SYSTEM AND I CAN ASSURE YOU OF ONE THING, MISS BLAISE...
ONE OF THE FOUR OF US MUST BE A DOUBLE AGENT
ONE OF THE TWO...
COFFEE'S READY
759

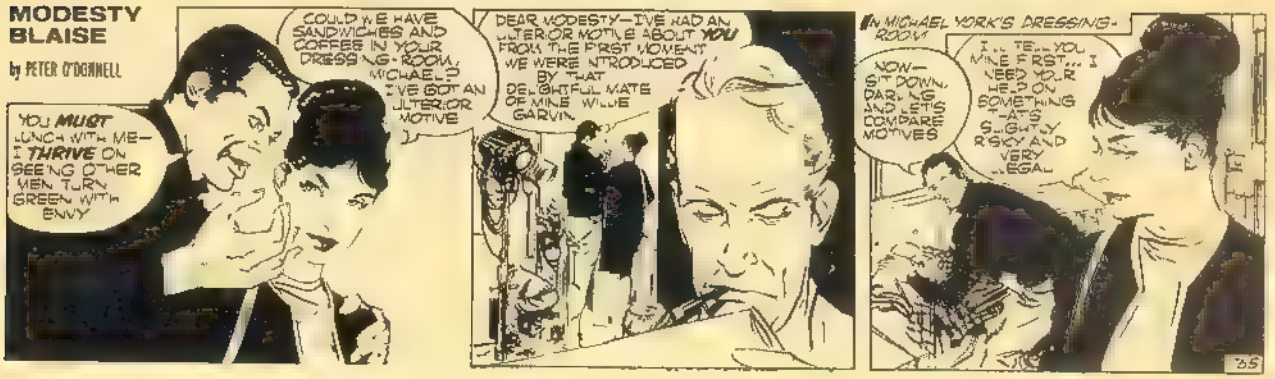

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MORNING AT MODESTY'S DEN-COUSE...
PRINCESS...?
YES, WILLIE— ARE YOU UP?
SURE... I'VE BEEN TRYING TO THINK HOW WE CAN GET A LINE ON POOR OL' SIR G...
D'YOU RECKON THEY'VE SIGNED 'IM OFF?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT I DO KNOW HOW WE CAN FIND OUT WHETHER SEFTON OR RANSHAW IS THE DOUBLE AGENT — TELL WENG WE HAVE BREAKFAST IN FIVE MINUTES
760

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WILL YOU BE STAYING FOR LUNCH MR. GARVIN?
I DOUBT IT, WENG...
I THINK MISS BLAISE AND I MIGHT BE AWAY FOR A BIT
AH.. THEN I WILL CHECK HER EQUIPMENT
YOU DO THAT, WENG — NICE AND CAREFUL, LIKE I SHOWED YOU
761


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WILLIE I WANT YOU TO SPEND TODAY GETTING A LINE ON SEFTON AND RANSHAW
WHAT SORT OF LINE PRINCESS?
WELL... TO CROSS A NIGHT YOU'RE GOING TO SNATCH ONE OF THEM AND I'M GOING TO SNATCH THE OTHER... THAT SORT OF LINE
RIGHT — THAT'LL KEEP ME BUSY TODAY... WHAT'LL YOU BE DOING YOURSELF?
GOING TO THE THEATRE
762


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MICHAEL YORK... THAT MAD ACTOR FRIEND OF YOURS, WILLIE, WHO'S BEEN SKY-DIVING WITH US A FEW TIMES— HE KNOWS OUR BACKGROUND, DOESN'T HE?
MMM... BUT MIKE NEVER ASKS QUESTIONS AND NEVER TALKS— I MEAN NOT ABOUT US
DO YOU THINK I COULD PERSUADE HIM TO DO SOMETHING ILLEGAL FOR US?
PRINCESS... YOU MUST HAVE GOT THE GENERAL IDEA THAT YOU FASCINATE MIKE— I RECKON HE'D JUMP AT IT
GOOD... WE'LL NEED HIM TO ORRON NIGHT
'63

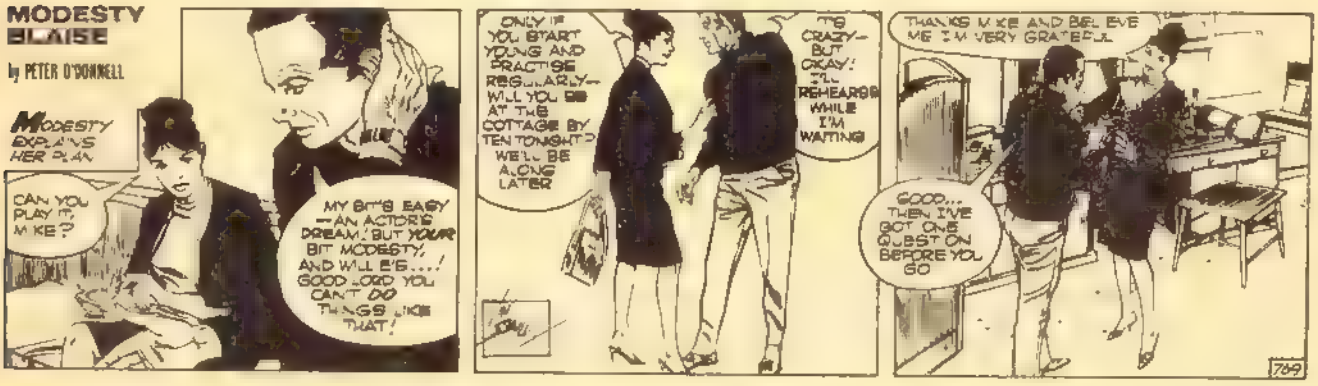
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
REHEARSAL AT "The New Sphere" THEATRE
...BUT TILL I COME AGAIN, NO BED SHALL E'ER BE GUILTY OF MY STAY NO REST BE INTERPOSER 'TWIXT US TWAIN
ALL RIGHT, MIKE, THANK YOU BOYS AND GIRLS — WE'LL BREAK FOR LUNCH
BACK AT TWO SHARP, PLEASE.
WELL SAID MY LORD BASSANIO
MODESTY SUPREMELY EDIBLE CREATURE. WHAT A MAGNIFICENT SURPRISE
764


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
COULD WE HAVE SANDWICHES AND COFFEE IN YOUR DRESSING-ROOM, MICHAEL? I'VE GOT AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE
YOU MUST LUNCH WITH ME— I THRIVE ON SEEING OTHER MEN TURN GREEN WITH ENVY
DEAR MODESTY— I'VE HAD AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE ABOUT YOU FROM THE FIRST MOMENT WE WERE INTRODUCED BY THAT DELIGHTFUL MATE OF MINE WILLIE GARVIN
IN MICHAEL YORK'S DRESSING-ROOM
I'LL TELL YOU MIKE FIRST... I NEED YOUR HELP ON SOMETHING THAT'S SLIGHTLY RISKY AND VERY ILLEGAL
NOW— SIT DOWN, DARLING, AND LET'S COMPARE MOTIVES
'65

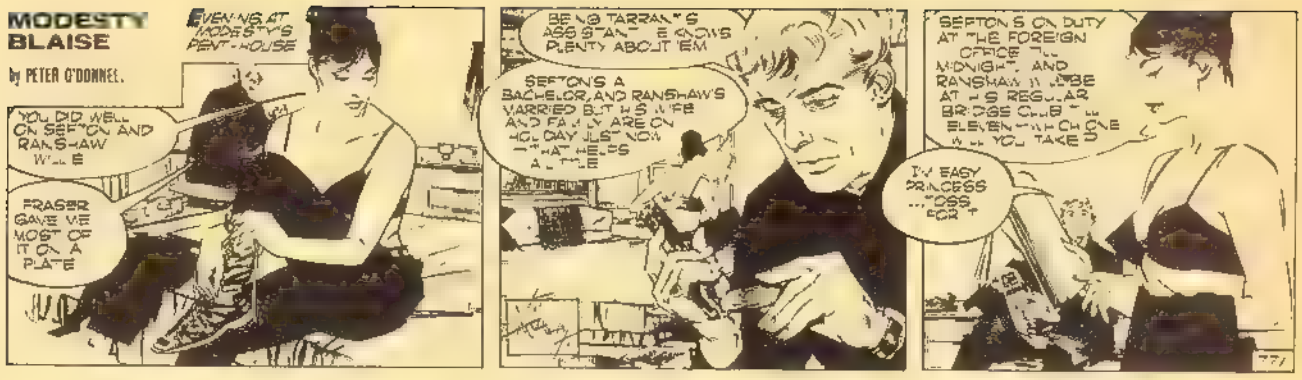
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I'D LOVE TO DO SOMETHING ILLEGAL FOR YOU MY SWEET— WHO DO YOU WANT SHOT?
MICHAEL... THIS IS REAL
MICHAEL YORK'S LIGHT-HEARTED MANNER FALLS AWAY...
I SEE...
WELL I KNOW MORE THAN A LITTLE ABOUT YOU AND WILLIE, ENOUGH TO SAY THIS—
YOU'RE A VERY TRUSTING DOT MICHAEL, BUT A NICE ONE— AND I'M NOT GOING TO USE YOU BLIND IT'S BETTER IF YOU KNOW THE SCORE
COUNT ME IN— AND I'LL ASK NO QUESTIONS
'66

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THAT'S SEVEN-AND-SIX MR YORK
...NECTAR AND AMBROSIA AS SUPPLIED BY THE KORNER KAFE!
...LEASE MR JONESY—I'M CHARMING THIS MADLY ROMANTIC YOUNG GIRL INTO LETTING ME HOLD HER PURSE WHILE WE EAT
OOH YOU ARE A SHOCKER
NOW... YOU TALK AND I'LL LISTEN
...STARTS WITH A MAN CALLED TARRANT ...SIR GERALD TARRANT
767

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MODESTY OUTLINES THE SITUATION TO MICHAEL YORK
I SEE... THIS CHAP TARRANT HAS VANISHED WITH SOMETHING IMPORTANT AND THE BIGWIGS THINK HE'S A TRAITOR...
BUT YOU THINK HE'S BEEN SNATCHED AND THAT HE WAS FRAMED BY THE REAL TRAITOR— EITHER SEFTON OR RANSHAW?
TAKE THAT AS CERTAIN... ...YOU HELP?
I'LL BE GLAD TO—AND DON'T WORRY THAT I'LL EVER TALK, MODESTY
I'M SURE OF THAT, NOW GIVE ME A CIGARETTE AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO
768

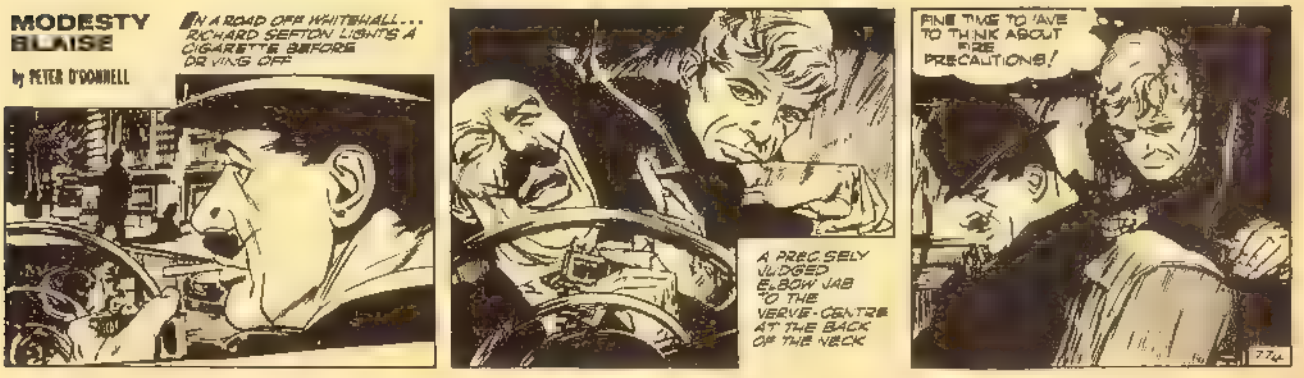

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MODESTY EXPLAINS HER PLAN
CAN YOU PLAY IT, MIKE?
MY BIT'S EASY —AN ACTOR'S DREAM! BUT YOUR BIT MODESTY, AND WILL B'G...! GOOD LORD YOU CAN'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT!
ONLY IF YOU START YOUNG AND PRACTISE REGULARLY— WILL YOU BE AT THE COTTAGE BY TEN TONIGHT? WE'LL BE ALONG LATER
IT'S CRAZY— BUT OKAY! I'LL REHEARSE WHILE I'M WAITING
THANKS MIKE AND BELIEVE ME I'M VERY GRATEFUL
GOOD... THEN I'VE GOT ONE QUESTION BEFORE YOU GO
769

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IF YOU DO SAVE TARRANT WHAT'S MY REWARD—FIVE GOLD ROUBLES OR A WEEK-END PASS?
ANYTHING ...JUST CHOOSE IT, MIKE
YOU REALLY MEAN THAT, DON'T YOU? TARRANT'S A LUCKY MAN...
HE'S MY FRIEND AND IN BAD TROUBLE
AM I RIGHT IF I ASK YOU TO PASS ON HOW MUCH I KNOW IS WORTH FOR SERVICES RENDERED OR FOR MY IRRESISTIBLE CHARM?
IT'S YOUR CHARM ...CONVINCE YOU SOMEHOW
770


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
EVENING AT MODESTY'S PENT-HOUSE
YOU DID WELL ON SEFTON AND RANSHAW WILLIE
FRASER GAVE ME MOST OF IT ON A PLATE
BEING TARRANT'S ASSISTANT HE KNOWS PLENTY ABOUT 'EM
SEFTON'S A BACHELOR AND RANSHAW'S MARRIED BUT HIS WIFE AND FAMILY ARE ON HOLIDAY JUST NOW — THAT HELPS A LITTLE
SEFTON'S ON DUTY AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE TILL MIDNIGHT, AND RANSHAW'LL BE AT HIS REGULAR BRIDGE CLUB TILL ELEVEN — WHICH ONE WILL YOU TAKE?
I'M EASY PRINCESS — YOSS FOR T
771

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
A DUTY OFFICER'S ROOM IN WHITEHALL — AT MIDNIGHT...
HALLO, RICHARD — ANYTHING TO KEEP ME AWAKE TONIGHT?
NOT UNLESS D-SECTION COVERS THROUGH WITH THAT REPORT WE ASKED FOR
F TARRANT'S ALREADY HANDED OVER 'The Acorn' FILE. THERE WON'T BE ANY D-SECTION MUCH LONGER
NO, I'M AFRAID NOT. GOODNIGHT DAVID
RICHARD SEFTON WALKS TO HIS PARKED CAR
772

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
EVENING, OFFICER
A NICE ONE SIR
ONE THING ABOUT WORKING AT NIGHT, SIR — AT LEAST YOU CAN PARK YOUR CAR WITH NO TROUBLE
THAT'S TRUE
AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE PARKING METER
YAK-YAK RUDDY YAK WHY ISN'T E BUSY LOCKING FOR VILLAINS?
773


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN A ROAD OFF WHITEHALL... RICHARD SEFTON LIGHTS A CIGARETTE BEFORE DRIVING OFF
A PRECISELY JUDGED ELBOW JAB TO THE VERVE-CENTRE AT THE BACK OF THE NECK
FINE TIME TO 'AVE TO THINK ABOUT FIRE PRECAUTIONS!
774

COMIC MEDIA

TRIGAN EMPIRE	27
CORTO MALTESE	28
THE PEOPLE'S COMIC BOOK	29
LITTLE NEMO	29
DAN DARE	30
PHILEMON	31

The Look and Learn Book of THE TRIGAN EMPIRE by Don Lawrence and Mike Butterworth (IPC Magazines Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, England, 1973; 72pp - colour; 9¼"x 12"; 80p)

It's not hard for me to be objective about this none-too-lavish book. For a start, I'm an early-'50s man, and not a mid-'60s one and thus nostalgia doesn't really enter into it. Also, I've never really been that keen on Don Lawrence - an artist whose limitations far outweigh his talent.

Still and all, one can't be too harsh with a book that with one gigantic lurch pushes British comics out of the difficult-to-get-hold-of-and-thus not-collected bracket and into the hallowed realms of Collectors Item Classics. Americans will love this book.

And why should they not? It's nice reproduction, with an excellent and punchy cover - splendid end-papers - and contains 68-pages of strip (don't be too brutal in your handling of it, though - it's what is known as 'Perfect Bound', which means that if you open it up too quickly - the spine drops off and the pages pages fall out.)

Mind you, chance'd be a fine thing. Though the Americans would surely buy it, they might not even get the opportunity. And, such are the vagaries of modern publishing even the home market (that's us folks) is having difficulty in getting hold of copies.

The Trigan Empire is officially classed as an "Annual". Annuals are put on sale for the Christmas market around August/September. But - bookshops will only order books they know will sell. ("'Trigan Empire' - what ...is...that?"). When you next saunter around John Menzies or W.H.Smith, you'll see dozens of Beano, Dandy, Sparky, Follyfoot, Magic Roundabout, etc., Annuals, but you won't see no Trigan Empire. There'll be a lot of pulping in January...

The Trigan Empire' is, economically, a bummer, alas. So how is it doing on the artistic front? Mild, sir...mild.

It's the same old story. You can get the finest artist in the world to draw your strip, and he can fill page upon page of beautifully delineated banks of frames - but what do you do about the writer. When, in fact, is someone going to create the flawless strip - the perfect combination of story and art? You'd think after 80 years or so there might be an answer to this question.

Trigan' in many ways, is the most sloppily conceived strip of all time. It's been running continuously since 1965, in Ranger or Look and Learn (it has been suggested incidentally, that 'Trigan' is the only thing that keeps Look and Learn afloat, so much for education), and was originally planned as a quality strip for a quality paper. Well for all the banging of drums and sounding of trumpets, Ranger was a failure at the start. But "Trigan' did have Don Lawrence, and Don Lawrence was a good artist - so 'Trigan carried on.

I've no quarrel with Lawrence, really. He is a good artist - but, alas, he's got no imagination. Yes, he can draw monsters, and ancient cities, and futuristic flying craft and old men (he's very good on old men, especially if they have drooping Saxon moustaches), but he stubbornly refuses to push himself further than he has to. He will give you the adequate shot, and will sometimes incorporate into the adequate shot the pleasing effect. He has rarely, if ever, to my mind, bothered to come up with the great shot - and/or the thrilling effect.

However that may be, "Trigan' is good to look at in the middle of all those plonking articles on history, natural history, literature, science, and so forth. You can't get away from the fact that a colour-spread in strip format cheers things up no end.

But the writing's another matter. As I said, "Trigan' must be the most sloppily conceived strip in the world. You might call Mike Butterworth, the writer, the Harold Robbins of British comics - compulsive reading - but no depth.

No width, length, or breadth, for that matter. "Trigan' was conceived as a saga - the history of one people triumphing over all odds. Unfortunately, Butterworth (in the strip field - anyhow) is one of those writers who really do write off the top of their heads as the saying goes - never planning, never checking, never working things out properly - always forgetting situations, characters, plot devices that he's used before.

At the beginning of the story, we have a map of the planet Elekton, to make things easier for the reader to follow the action. It looks good, but it's a silly idea, since Butterworth never uses it again (except, perhaps, as a stick to beat himself with). For instance, at one point in the story, Zorth, the evil king of Loka, snarls "It matters little if we obliterate Vorg...or turn our faces the other way and wipe out the country of Cato next..." - forgetting entirely that if he wants to get to Cato he'll have to cross Vorg to get there! The book is full of strokes like that.

On page 16, we see the Tharvs - now a homeless people, since their city has been smashed to rubble by the Lokan air fleet - heading for the safety of the wilderness of Vorg. The captain informs us: "Nothing remained of the beautiful city..." The Tharvs, (including Perie, patriarchal mainstay of the strip), after, presumably, some weeks in the desert, meet Trigo's Vorgs. There is a confrontation - some chat, a bit of a fight...all turns out well. Trigo accepts the Tharvs into his tribe. Meanwhile, we are told on page 20, "while all this was happening, the air-fleets of the vicious Lokans were pounding to rubble the last remains of the lovely city of the peace-loving Tharvs..." And taking their time about doing it...

Other major irritants include: Trigo's exaggerated, and almost schizoid, claims about the super-city he's building - sometimes it'll last for a thousand years, sometimes for ten thousand - the astonishing speed at which the city itself is built - I calculate that it took around a year at the most... to build the entire vast city that you see on the front end papers of the book, the uncanny way in which simple desert tribesman can master the complex controls of sophisticated mechanical war weapons - like, in about five seconds flat!, ludicrous plot-devices such as the mark that Vorg chiefs place on their son's hands at birth", which has, in eight years, only appeared in one frame, and generally ghastly writing, such as when Trigo's dullard brother moans: "I am only a simple warrior. Oh, if only my son Janno were here to tell me what to do" - proving that the child is father to the father, I suppose.

Still and all, one can't really complain. I never thought I.P.C. would publish a "Dan Dare" annual (w.a.f. though it is), let alone a book about the Trigan Empire.

For those who have a passion for documentation, the following may be of interest: the book contains the very first Trigan story (18th Sept. '65 - 29th Jan.'66) complete and uncut (though added to, by a cunning artman) from page 4 to 46 of the book, and the second story (5th Feb.'66 - 28th May'66), fairly well manhandled, with from approximately 2-5 frames cut per week's instalment (pages 47 to the end). The cutting doesn't show too much, though.

For 80p, I've got to own up that this is a bargain, however. I only wish that Mike Butterworth had bothered to read de Camp or Lin Carter, or even (remember "The Hyborian Age"?) Robert E.Howard, on how to construct a logical and believable fantasy world. "The Trigan Empire" could have been so much better.

Chris Lowder

CORTO MALTESE LOUNGED AROUND ON THE VERANDA OF THE HOTEL JAVA IN PARAMARIBO, DUTCH GUYANA IT WAS EASY TO SEE THAT HE WAS A MAN WHO WENT WHERE DESTINY LED HIM

THE SECRET OF TRISTAN BANTAM

CORTO MALTESE - L'AIGLE DU BRESIL and RENDEZ-VOUS A BAHIA by Hugo Pratt (Casterman, Paris, France, 1973; 64pp; 9½"x 13"; 14F)
EUROPEAN CARTOONIST (Ed.& Pub. by Nino Bernazzali, Genoa, Italy. No.1; 56pp)

The publication of this first issue of EUROPEAN CARTOONIST does in itself represent quite a step forward in the world of comic strip art, for it has caused the language barriers to be broken down, thus enabling the best of the little known European artists to be seen by a far wider audience.

And the choice of Hugo Pratt as their first subject is a very worthwhile one. Pratt has done much work in both Italian and French, and has been working in comics for nearly 30 years, though still virtually unknown to the English-speaking world. His main character, however, Corto Maltese, is now well known throughout Europe.

Hugo Pratt was born in Rimini (Italy) in 1927, and spent much of his childhood in Africa. In '45 he created his first character "The Ace of Spades", a costumed crime-fighter, based loosely on the American super-heroes of the time. His style was very much that of the Quality and DC artists such as Lou Fine and Bob Kane, and he admits to having been influenced by them and Milton Caniff and Will Eisner. In 1950 he decided to move to Argentina upon receiving a better offer of work, and there he created "Sgt. Kirk" - a colonial period piece involving an ex-U.S. army officer and his fights for the Indians 'Ernie Pike", a Second World War strip drawn in the Caniff style; and "Wheeling", the story of an American colonial town, as well as doing work for Fleetway Publications (G.B.) on their "War Picture Library' series.

In '64 Pratt returned to Europe, and three years later he created a series 'A Ballad of the Salty Sea" for the magazine 'Sgt. Kirk", a sort of ultra-professional fanzine, distributed through professional channels, devoted primarily to Pratt's work. In 70, the magazine folded (although it is now being published on a fan scale only) and Pratt was asked to develop a series for the French children's comic PIF. He decided to expand on one of his characters from "A Ballad..." and thus was Corto Maltese reincarnated.

Pratt draws on much of his experience from when he was in Argentina for his "Corto Maltese" stories, which involve the main character in a series of escapades up and down the Brazilian coast. Corto Maltese is a strangely cold character, who in the first episode comes to the rescue of a certain Professor Stein (later to become his steadfast companion) to disastrous consequences.

This is where the European Cartoonist and the two Casterman Corto Maltese books overlap. The two books both contain 3 stories each, of which this is the first in "Rendez-vous a Bahia', and this is also the story translated for the first issue of EC

In fact the translation itself is really the only quibble that I have with this magazine. It is possibly the most wooden translation that I have ever read in a pro-zine, being literall taken word for word from the original. Unfortunately, this cannot be done for Hugo Pratt's stories, and they have to be reworked when translated. A prime example of the bad translation, is, of all places, on the cover, where Corto Maltese replies, "I was not born in June, but on July 10th. Ehy, but what's the matter with you?' (Sounds like a very bad Chekov translation, doesn't it?).

But the Casterman editions are superb. These are reprints of the first six PIF stories, and follow Corto Maltese's adventures from the first time that he meets up with Steiner and the boy, Tristan Bantam, through to the search for Tristan's Brazilian half-sister, Morgana, their finding of her and the mystic, Bouche Doree, and their fight for and with the brigand, Tex Fixee against the regime.

The world of Corto Maltese is that of the cool adventurer, who never seeks out trouble, but is always landed in the thick of it at the most unexpected times. Corto is an anti-hero, preferring always not to get involved, but because of his chivalrous and honest attitude, he always fights for what he believes in, even though the odds may be 100-1 against him. This is the world of the Amazon, the Brazilian waterways and of the magician where dreams become reality and fiction becomes fact.

Pratt's art is very stark (like Toth's), expressing the maximum with the least effort, very much in the Caniff style, sometimes looking very rough, and at other times brilliant in its simplicity. The stories follow the same mold. Restricted to the 20-page per story format of PIF, Pratt barely has time for characterisation so he solves this by employing semi-continued stories (single stories that are complete in themselves, but form part of an overall story) and a very economical use of words.

Characterisation is brief but adequate. The only character you never really get to know is Corto Maltese himself. One knows that he likes to relax in a big wicker chair, smoking a cigarillo, and how he would react in a certain situation, but not really who or what he is. He seems very much of a cold Humphrey Bogart, a man of few possessions, but with friends everywhere.

In all, the charm lies in the genuine simplicity of story and art together. I would advise you to try and get hold of one of the Casterman editions to see for yourself; if French isn't your line, then the European Cartoonist, with its extra information on Pratt and the "Wheeling" story, would make a very good start. (This is now available from Nick Landau at £1.50 each.)

Nick Landau.

...AND HE KNOWS
BY READING CM NEWS!

COMIC MEDIA NEWS may not tell you where evil lurks (unless Marvel or DC cancel a good mag) but it will give you the very latest Stateside news; show you new covers, tell you of the latest science fiction happenings in films, TV and books; keep you up to date with news and informed gossip from the fan and pro worlds, plus a good deal more. COMIC MEDIA NEWS is Britain's leading newszine, out monthly. Wrap around A4 and full litho throughout. Join the many people who regularly read CMN, send 16p to the CM subscription address on page 3 of this mag (foreign orders add 4p postage).
..And if you find the weed of crime - keep it to yourself!

COMIC MEDIA NEWS

THE PEOPLE'S COMIC BOOK translated by Endymion Wilkinson (Anchor Press, New York, 1973; 252pp; 7"x 10"; $3.95)

This book may be designed more for China watchers and Maoists than for fans of the normal comics; however, it is interesting to see how a non-Western culture uses the graphic story, and this collection of seven dramas does have a certain appeal mainly in the way that these stories differ from our normal fare.

The first, anonymous, story is "San-Yuan-Li", a historical yarn telling how brave peasants defied the corrupt Manchu Emperor and defeated the opium-trafficking British imperialists, plenty of blood and class solidarity in 43 frames of simple art with solid text captions below. The final words exhort the reader to throw himself "ever more firmly into the struggle against British imperialism."

The second piece "Red Women's Detachment", by Liang Xin (writer) and Li Zi-shun (artist), is 136 frames long, and deals with a group of women soldiers in the early days of the Chinese revolution; the third story keeps up the historical progression by taking us on to 1949, for "Bravery on the Deep Blue Seas", telling of the capture of Hainan Island and, more importantly, the securing of fishing boats for the assault from the local people, not by force but by a little applied brotherhood. The story is by Liang Xin again, art by Xu Jin.

"Li Shuangshuang", written by Li Jun, comes next: this runs to a massive 185 frames as by her example the heroine brings mass solidarity to her commune, and finally brings into line her lazy husband. This is followed by "Hot on the Trail", a

102 Hong fixed his eyes on the girl, then in an outburst of feeling said, "Comrade Qing-hua, the Party has approved your application for admission to the Party. From now on you're a vanguard fighter of the proletariat. If we should fail to get away, then you Party members who have pulled back will be the mainstay in the future. You will shoulder the responsibility till victory is ours!"

piece from 1965 now ideologically incorrect, written by An Zhong-min and Zhu Xiang-chun, with drawings by Hao Shi in a detailed, straightforward manner. In 133 frames, an enemy plot to destroy the electricity plant at Canton on National Day is detected and foiled by the quick wits of Li Ming-gang and his comrades in the national security office.

'Letters from the South", adapted from a Vietnamese original in 1965 with art by Ch Chen Yun-hua and Hu Zu-qing, shows how the local villagers fight against the American robbers and the reactionary U.S.-Ngu clique, until in the end they capture the American destroyer 'Liberty". " The dawn light appeared in the East, it was already day. A Ha said joyously, "Let's quickly write and tell our compatriots in the north, tell Uncle Ho, tell the people of the world, tell them: we are fighting.'

The final story is rather different; it is an adaptation of a film, and uses photographs to tell of "Lei Feng", a particularly selfless member of the People's Liberation Army. In 177 frames we learn of his many good deeds and the way his example turns the rest of the squad into the paths of righteousness, and also how his spirit continues to shine forth undiminished; strangely, his actual death is not chronicled.

So, in seven stories we see how far comics have moved in China since the Chinese editions of The Phantom, Mickey Mouse and Flash Gordon in the thirties; pages four inches by five, about five lines (when translated) of text under each full-page picture, plus a few word balloons in some books. In the main, the artwork is as sophisticated as the ordinary U.S. variety but how can one judge the stories when they were designed for a totally different culture? "Hot on the Trail" is the most familiar type to a westerner, with the dedicated detective tracking down the foreign bomb-planters, but it seems to be a side-track. Are these stories stressing Right Thinking, proletarian solidarity, and the invincible armour of Chairman Mao's thoughts, what the man in the paddy-field wants to read, or what he feels he ought to read, or are they pure propaganda?

This is an interesting book, but not an exciting one. It shows what a comic can be - pretty, adult, and alien, designed not for children but for the ordinary worker. It was a good idea to publish this book - but I can't help wondering what the inscrutable ones would make of such an anthology in reverse, with The Hulk, Superman, Conan and Sgt. Fury going about their usual brand of escapades in Chinese.

Martin Lock

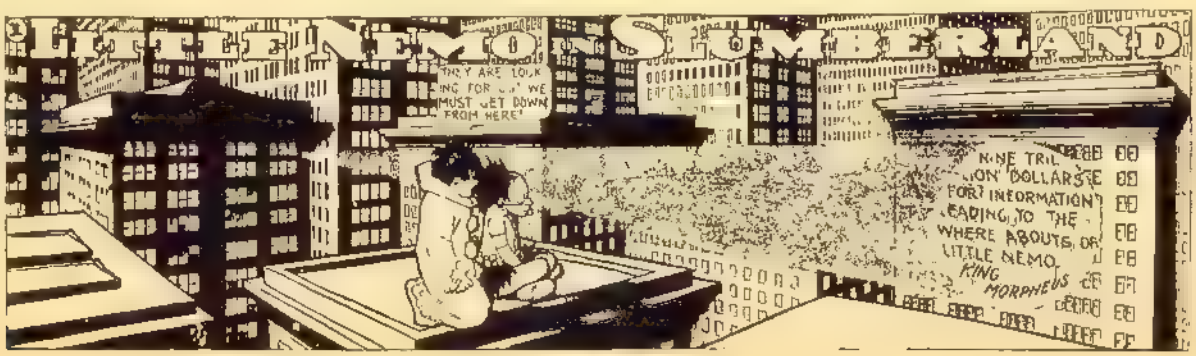
LITTLE NEMO by Windsor McCay (Nostalgia Press, New York; 264pp - colour and black and white; 11"x 14½"; $25.00)

Martin Lock

'Little Nemo in Slumberland" was a full colour Sunday page, which began on the 15th October 1905, and continued (with a gap of a few years around 1920) into the late twenties. As the four-page introduction to this book tells us, its fantasy and draughtsmanship made it an immediate success, and it was soon running in the pull-out comic sections of Sunday newspapers throughout the U.S.A. and, apparently, Europe. Little Nemo was the creation of one man, and featured his work only over the years - a virtuoso performance by Winsor McCay, who based the appearance of young Nemo on his son.

The first few months deal with the various attempts to get Nemo from his bed to Slumberland. As always, all the "action" takes place in Nemo's dreams and the final panel shows him awakening, often as a result of something in the dream. The page for March 4th 1906 was the first to show us the cantankerous Flip, nephew of the dawn guard and soon to become Nemo's companion, the next page was the first to drop the traditional caption beneath every panel, with instead a brief synopsis at the top of the page. Nemo had now embarked on his first continued story, no longer did he have to start each episode from bed - now he could continue from where he'd left off the previous week. A proper meeting with the beautiful Princess of Slumberland was now inevitable - and after many strange incidents on the way, and the dropping of the story synopsis completely, they were united in July.

The next step in Little Nemo's story was a tour of the wonderful kingdom of Slumberland, in the company of the young princess - and Flip, ageless cigar-smoking child or midget, was never far away. In


LITTLE NEMO'S SLUMBERLAND
SEPT 29th 1907
THEY ARE LOOK ING FOR US WE MUST GET DOWN FROM HERE
NINE TRIL ION DOLLARS FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE WHERE ABOUTS OF LITTLE NEMO
KING MORPHEUS

E.C.
PORTFOLIO 3

A lavish volume featuring 5 complete stories from E.C. Comics of the 1950's. Reprinted the same size as the original art in black and white, these stories feature superb artwork by Graham Ingels, Al Williamson, Wally Wood, Al Feldstein, and John Severin. Also included are four E.C. covers in brilliant FULL COLOR. 44 pages; 12" x 15". Paperbound. Edition is limited to 1,000 copies. Now Available at only. $14.95

& number 4

Identical in format to the above book, here is the 4th in this fine series. Featuring 5 more complete E.C. stories with art by Graham Ingels, Al Williamson, Harvey Kurtzman, and Bernie Krigstein, along with 4 E.C. covers in FULL COLOR. Edition is limited to 1,000 copies. Available now at only. .$14.95

THUN'DA

Frank Frazetta's magnificent comic, THUN'DA #1, reprinted in its entirety in this high-quality, deluxe volume. Here are all 4 adventures of Thun'da, King of the Congo by Frank Frazetta, reprinted from the original art in black & white. FULL COLOR cover. 32 pages; 9" x 12". Paperbound. Only $9.95

PLEASE INCLUDE $1.00 FOR POSTAGE & REGISTRATION

If nothing in this advertisement interested you, but you would like to have a copy of our brand new, fully-illustrated, 16 page catalogue of new books on Comic Art, Science Fiction and the Cinema, just send $1.00 (for air mail postage) along with your name and address to:

COLLECTORS BOOK STORE
6763 HOLLYWOOD BLVD.
HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028 U.S.A.

July 1907, "the Imp" joined the group, an irreverant cannibal islander, and shortly after this the princess faded into the background. The adventures became stranger; Nemo, Flip and the Imp might be chased by giants into a land where they seemed enormous in turn, or would explore Befuddle Hall, where down is always up or sideways, or would find themselves in the grimly realistic Shanty-town. After a year, the dreams changed abruptly to the real world, but the happenings were still as bemusing as ever: Tears became floods, as in Alice in Wonderland - you also had a walking bed, a drive through the streets on a vast locomotive with Flip at the controls, yeast that expands to fill the city, and even pages where the trio are upset by what they recognise to be the failings of their artist in drawing them. In early 1909, the imp having dropped out for a while, Kiddo joins Nemo and Flip, and in May we go back to the continued stories, and an epic attempt to return Nemo to Slumberland which finally succeeds at Christmas.

1910, the last year covered by this book, launches Nemo, Flip, Kiddo and the imp on voyages in the royal airship. In March, Kiddo parachutes home, but the others, in some wonderful sequences, go on to visit the moon, Mars (wholly owned by B.Gosh, so that ordinary folk have to buy not only air, but words, from him or stop breathing and talking), and the U.S.A., where New York treats them to a celebrity welcome. We leave Nemo in full flight at the year's end, and wait for the next volume...

The strip then is a landmark of fantastic writing and art, and nowadays Winsor McCay is getting some of the recognition that he deserves, for "Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend", some pioneer animation, and other work, but mainly for Little Nemo. But what about this book? Well, it does have its faults. There were 272 Sunday pages in the period covered; 108 of these are reproduced in full colour, another 134 in black and white, all in the proper order, reproduced almost 30% smaller than they originally were. And the other 30 Sunday pages? One, reduced more than 50%, is on the back cover in full colour; but 18 are crammed onto two pages at the back of the book, reduced almost 80% to make them often unreadable, and another 11 assorted pages are just not here at all. For a senses-stunning $25.00, one might expect better service - it's like buying a novel and then finding a dozen pages missing. It isn't as if they were too rare; one of them, the April 14th, 1907 page, was reprinted in Britain not long ago. The price is rather high if one also considers that this Nostalgia Press edition was printed and bound in Italy, along with at least two European editions with exactly the same art, including covers.

If you've got the money to spare, do buy this book, and treat yourself to a magnifying glass as well; McCay was a very special artist, influential in a number of ways, and the colour pages in particular are quite often marvellous. Otherwise, look out for Nemo in a book club or paper-bound edition; he is worth meeting.

"Pshaw! I wonder what made me dream such a thing? Too many hot biscuits, I guess."

DAN DARE ANNUAL 1974 by Frank Hampson (IPC Magazines, London, 1973; 72pp - colour; 9½"x 12"; 80p)

Without the slightest fanfare to herald its approach, Britain has undergone a major revolution in 1973. After years of lying fallow, the graphic drama has at last emerged from the limbo of neglect into an abundance that would be almost embarrassing were it not so welcome. The early summer saw the publication by Hamlyn of the superb Burne Hogarth "Tarzan" (despite what Chris Lowder thinks) and now I.P.C., not noted in the past for its patronage of the comic artform as something to be taken seriously, has shot a major broadside in the battle with its publication of two well-printed, colour-filled hardback collections of comic material that fans have been lauding for years past.

Among the welter of annuals now decorating newsagents' shelves are two that stand out as "something special": Don Lawrence's "Trigan Empire" and the reprints of Frank Hampson's "Dan Dare" strips from the sadly, now-defunct "Eagle" of the fifties. The latter book, scantily annotated as it is, is the more important work. Hampson's beautifully detailed drawings were far too good to remain buried in fast-fading copies of the "Eagle", lost to all but the fortunate collectors who, unlike myself, had the good sense to guard their weekly copies of the "Eagle" with the tender loving care that they required. I.P.C., thankfully, has remedied the errors of all those less careful comic fans like myself and in a well-printed, firmly bound volume, they have now brought together two of Colonel Dare's most exciting adventures: the intriguing "Red Moon Mystery", which first saw publication in 1951, and the less important (and less complete) "Safari in Space" adventure.

Hampson's artwork and scripting of the two stories combine to give the Dare volume a classic timelessness that few twenty-year old comic creations attain. Despite the dramatic developments in the Space Age over the past decade, the Dan Dare stories hang together impressively: they have not dated at all.

In a very brief forward to the book - printed in the space that the "Eagle" title block would have occupied - I.P.C. attempt to place Dan Dare in the context of his times, paying rare tribute - rare for a British publication, that is - to Frank Hampson, whose part in creating the lasting qualities of the character cannot be over-emphasised.

Hampson's work remains impressive. Without a doubt he produced the best work that has ever graced a British comic. His wealth of detail and the spread of his imaginative realisation of a world set just beyond the immediate future has not been equalled. Little touches in the "Red Moon" story, for instance, are remarkable, such as the futuristic architecture one glimpses through the windows of the moon base or from the offices of Sir Hubert Guest lend a quiet realism to the work. The "Red Moon" story itself is science fiction 'par excellence' and, amazingly, one sees in it what could only have been the source for Kubrick's "2001" - a monolith on the Red

Moon that is straight out of the Clark/Kubrick "Space Odyssey

Both stories have been necessarily condensed and adapted to fit the slender 70-page volume. While one accepts this as necessary one must regret the almost total disruption of the pace of Hampson s creations , both stories appear to rush their conclusions in the current versions and more than one reference to something that has not actually appeared in the book goes without explanation. "The Red Moon Mystery", perhaps, suffers less than the second episode does, but both stories lose rather than gain by the condensation. The "Safari in Space" segment works up to a giant climax with Dare Digby and Peabody poised for their exploration of Terra Nova and leaves the reader literally hanging in space. Fine for a weekly, or even monthly, but hardly fair when I.P.C. apparently intends to allow a year to elapse before one discovers what Dare and friends find on the new world.

Aside from this quibble, the format of the book itself needs few criticisms. It is interesting to note that the first few pages of the Red Moon story were re-touched by John Burns Jr. See if you can spot where the Burns becomes Hampson.

Looking at the two stories in this volume one from 1951 and the other from 1959 (which is the last one that Hampson did) one is impressed by the completely contemporary look that they have. Compared to the admittedly older and cruder drawings by Dick Calkins for Buck Rogers in the U.S. Bonanza Books volume one sees instantaneously that Hampson's work belongs to the latter half of the Twentieth Century whereas the other - some of it published as late as 1946 - harks back to the illustrations that used to grace the pulps in the early twenties and thirties. Hampson is a graphic artist of the first order: his use of 'camera" angles is Hitchcockian with a dash of "Citizen Kane' thrown in for good measure. Like Foster and Raymond, Hampson opts for dramatic realism some of his work is almost photographic in quality , yet his work on Digby remains firmly entrenched in the "comic book' genre.

To do a Chris Lowder on it, I might as well admit that I find the almost total absence of adult sexuality in the strip a trifle off-putting, but one must remember that Dan Dare was created with a very definite audience in mind, and this explains the somewhat antiseptic quality of the Dan Dare/Joycelyn Peabody relationship One can't help wishing, though, that Hampson had at one stage done a fully adult orientated version to permit us to see that powerful artwork of his let loose on a few nudes.

Nevertheless, with whatever shortcomings the Dan Dare volume has - and its ghastly cover is not the least of them - I.P.C. is to be congratulated for having published it. "Dan Dare" lives, as they say in Warren magazines and I for one am grateful.

Tom Darragh.

PHILEMON ET LE NAUFRAGE DU "A" and PHILEMON ET LE PIANO SAVAGE by Fred (Dargaud Editeur, 12 Rue Blaise Pascal, 92 Neil'/-sur-Seine, Paris, France, 1972/73; 48pp - colour; 9"x 11¾"; 10F)

Nick Landau.

Fred is one of the true surrealist cartoonists of our age. His work has been appearing in Pilote (the French comic magazine) for many years now, and of his many creations, Philemon is probably the best known

"Philemon et le Naufrage du "A"" tells the story of a young country lad, Philemon, who finds a bottle in his fathers well, containing a message with a desperate plea for help. By mistake he falls into it, and when he comes up again, instead of finding himself in the well, he is stranded on the shores of an island with centaurs and exploding clocks. After looking around he meets up with a Mr. Barthelemy, who has apparently been trying to get off the island for 40 years. Barthelemy points to a map of the Atlantic Ocean, telling him that they are on the first "A" of Atlantic, and that to return home they must cross over to the second "A". Philemon spends the night in the house that Barthelemy is growing on the island, and during the night, sees a light on the beach. Rushing out to investigate, the two come across the captain of a "bottled" boat, who agrees to sail them to the second "A". There they disembark, and get trapped in a maze. Finally Philemon gets home, but in the process loses his companion.

The second book involves Philemon s return to "A", his battle with the savage piano in the arena of the Great Concert, and his finding of Mr. Barthelemy again.

Everything in these books take on a surrealist, Alice in Wonderland-type atmosphere, with such instances as Philemon being trapped in a "zebra gaol" (the black stripes are the bars), and his meeting with an explorer who is walking across the Atlantic Ocean, and who later pitches his tent on a wave. One of my favourite scenes is in the first book where Philemon and Barthelemy that the ship that they have just rescued, is, in fact, in a gigantic bottle, which can be corked or uncorked depending on the roughness of the sea. The action doesn't let up for a minute as Philemon is tossed from incident to incident

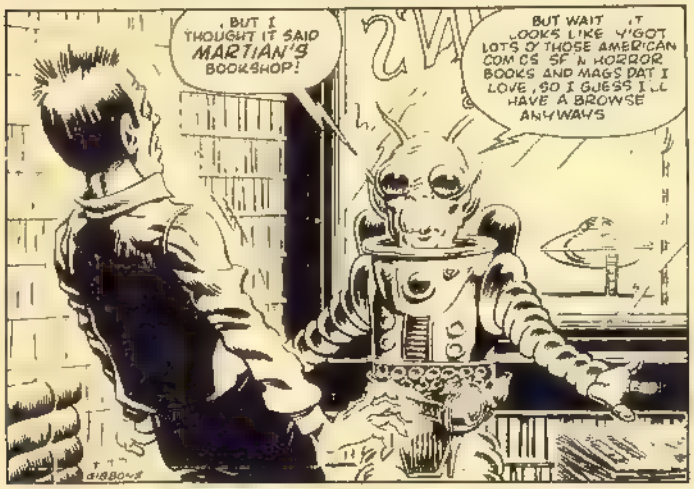
Fred's art style is very coarse looking, but it is superbly suited to this type of humour. But perhaps the nicest thing about the volumes is that if you don't know much French, then because of its simplicity, it's no struggle to get through. And if you don't know any, then there're always the pictures.

MARTIN'S BOOKSHOP

17, RUGBY STREET, LONDON WC1

JUST OFF SOUTHAMPTON ROW, HOLBORN. TEL: 01-242-6773

OPEN MONDAY-SATURDAY 9.00-6.00

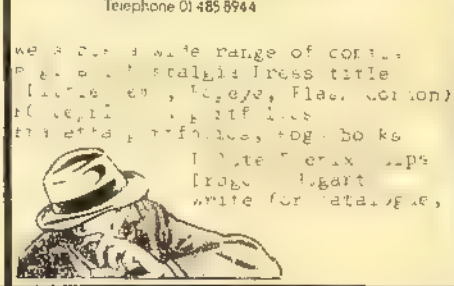

, BUT I THOUGHT IT SAID MARTIAN'S BOOKSHOP!
BUT WAIT ..T LOOKS LIKE Y'GOT LOTS O' THOSE AMERICAN COMICS SF N HORROR BOOKS AND MAGS DAT I LOVE, SO I GUESS I'LL HAVE A BROWSE ANYWAYS
GIBBONS

IF YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY TO 'DO THE BOOKSHOPS', WHY NOT TRY US, TOO?

COMPENDIUM BOOKS

240 Camden High Street London NW1 8QS

Telephone 01 485 8944



FOR THE VERY BEST IN ADVENTURE!

THE MENOMONEE FALLS GAZETTE & GUARDIAN

Fandom's best action-packed weekly paper is now bigger and better than ever. The GAZETTE carries the cream of the world's newspaper strips - Tolusty Blaise, Batman (from 1943), Superman (1941), The Spirit (Eisner), The Seekers (Burns), Jeff Hawke, Buck Rogers (Anderson), Garth (Bellamy), Scarth, Tarzan (Manning) and many more in each issue. 48 pages, 50 strips, superb reproduction. Available now Nos 57-60 @ 40p each, 1-94 @ 30p each, 95-99 (new size) 45p each, new issues arriving all the time. Subscription 10 issues - £4.00 And what the Gazette does for adventure the GUARDIAN does for humour. 14 of the funniest strips around. Available now Nos. 1-19 @ 25p each. write to:-

COLIN CAMPBELL, 'BIYTOO', PLAINS RD., GT. TOTHAM, MALDON, ESSEX, ENG.

A SHORT SHORT STOP AT THE TRANSYLVANIAN BRAIN SURGERY

is a fanzine for followers of

COMICS, FANTASY, SCI-FI, ETC

IN THE LATEST ISSUE:

- TOLKIEN
- MARTIAL ARTS SPECIAL
- MARVEL vs DC
- A FANTASY TALE
- TWO STRIPS

+POETRY, PICS, HUNDREDS OF MAGS FOR SALE

+

MUCH MORE

from

P. BARNETT
3 COLEFORD BRIDGE ROAD,
MYTCHETT,
CAMBERLEY,
SURREY.

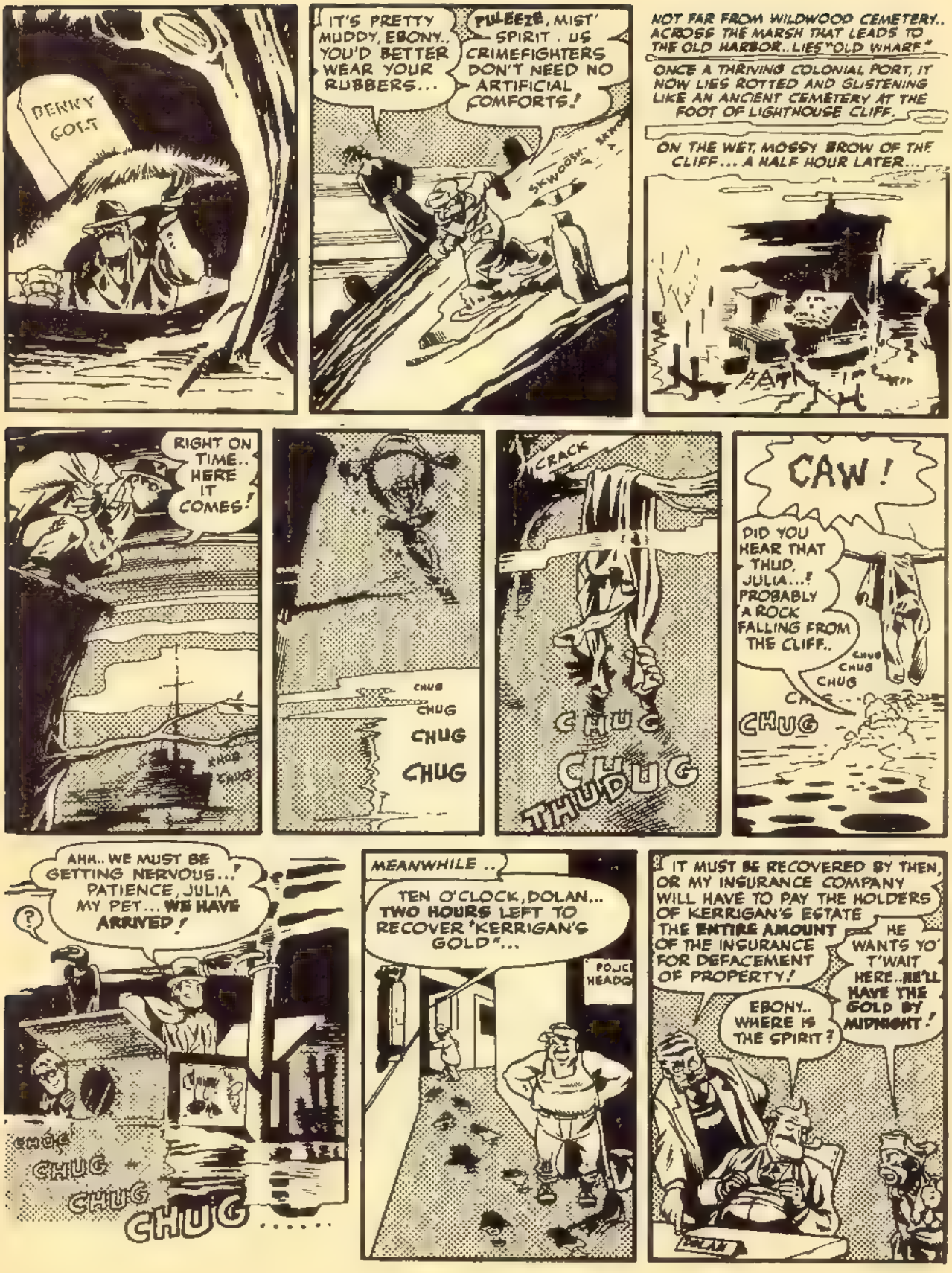
ONLY 20p

u.s. 45¢

SPIRIT SECTION
SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 1949
ACTION Mystery ADVENTURE
AN ANCIENT IRISH LEGEND HAS IT THAT IN 1690 PETER KERRIGAN PLANTED, IN THE EARTH OF HIS VAST ESTATE, A POT OF GOLD... IN GRATITUDE TO THE LEPRECHAUN WHO HAD MADE HIM WEALTHY. THROUGH THE CENTURIES, SO IT IS TOLD, THE LEPRECHAUN HAS BEEN WATCHING OVER THE GOLD IN ITS LONG FORGOTTEN GRAVE... PROTECTING IT... ..ER... OF COURSE, THIS WAS IN THE DAYS WHEN PEOPLE BELIEVED IN LEPRECHAUNS...
THEREFORE, YOU CAN EASILY UNDERSTAND WHY SPIN, ALI BEN, AND 'ROCKSALT' (THREE GENTLEMEN OF CHANCE) EXPECTED TO FALL HEIR TO KERRIGAN'S GOLD WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE AT ALL.
BUT WHAT THEY DIDN'T EXPECT WAS..
BOOM
AH.. GOOD EVENIN TO YEZ.
SPIRIT
BY WILL EISNER

World Rights Reserved

COO. . SHE BLEW TH' BLINKIN' DOOR TO SMITHEREENS!
GET OUTTA HERE... THIS IS A PRIVATE PARTY!
SURE NOW... IS THAT ANY WAY TO ACT TOWARD YER NEW PARTNER? I'M WAITING FOR MY SHARE O' KERRIGAN'S GOLD ..JUST AS YOU.
YOU SEE, LADS, I'M AN IMPORTANT PARTY IN THIS DEAL... AND I'M WAITIN' HERE TILL OUR FRIEND ARRIVES!
THIS IS A FOUR-WAY DIVVY ONLY, SISTER... AN' I'LL MAKE THAT OFFICIAL RIGHT NOW!
THWAK
?!
WISP O'SMOKE IS THE NAME I GO BY... NOW, IS IT FRIENDS WE'LL BE... OR..??
HEH SURE!
YEH
Y'SEEM T'BE WELL AWARE THAT WE ALL BACKED A CERTAIN PARTY IN THIS SCHEME... AN' T'NIGHT 'E SHOWS UP WITH TH' BOODLE...
MY FRIEND, HERE, IS SPIV OF LONDON I AM ALI BEN... AND ROCKSALT IS THE MAN YOU WERE .ER JUST INTRODUCED TO.
FAITH, NOW... Y'MAKE A BODY FEEL RIGHT AT HOME! SURE, AND IT'S THE VERY SAME MR. CARRION I'M WAITIN' FER.
THE FOG FLOATS GENTLY OVER A SMALL INCOMING BOAT, AND MOVES WITH SILENT EASE IN TOWARD THE COAST..AS FAR INLAND AS WILDWOOD CEMETERY...LINKING SEA AND LAND WITH A SOFT WET CARPET...
DENNY COLT
2


DENNY COLT
IT'S PRETTY MUDDY, EBONY.. YOU'D BETTER WEAR YOUR RUBBERS...
PLEEZE, MIST' SPIRIT . US CRIMEFIGHTERS DON'T NEED NO ARTIFICIAL COMFORTS!
SKWOOSH
NOT FAR FROM WILDWOOD CEMETERY.. ACROSS THE MARSH THAT LEADS TO THE OLD HARBOR..LIES "OLD WHARF."
ONCE A THRIVING COLONIAL PORT, IT NOW LIES ROTTED AND GLISTENING LIKE AN ANCIENT CEMETERY AT THE FOOT OF LIGHTHOUSE CLIFF.
ON THE WET, MOSSY BROW OF THE CLIFF... A HALF HOUR LATER...
RIGHT ON TIME.. HERE IT COMES!
KHOR
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
CRACK
CHUG
CHUG
THUDUG
CAW!
DID YOU HEAR THAT THUD, JULIA...! PROBABLY A ROCK FALLING FROM THE CLIFF..
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
AHH.. WE MUST BE GETTING NERVOUS...! PATIENCE, JULIA MY PET... WE HAVE ARRIVED!
?
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG .....
MEANWHILE ..
TEN O'CLOCK, DOLAN... TWO HOURS LEFT TO RECOVER "KERRIGAN'S GOLD"...
POLICE HEADQ
IT MUST BE RECOVERED BY THEN, OR MY INSURANCE COMPANY WILL HAVE TO PAY THE HOLDERS OF KERRIGAN'S ESTATE THE ENTIRE AMOUNT OF THE INSURANCE FOR DEFACEMENT OF PROPERTY!
HE WANTS YO' T'WAIT HERE..HE'LL HAVE THE GOLD BY MIDNIGHT!
EBONY.. WHERE IS THE SPIRIT?
DOLAN

MEANWHILE, LET US GROPE OUR WAY THROUGH THE FOG TO PIER 16, THE OLDEST OF THE ABANDONED WHARVES IN CENTRAL CITY'S LONG-UNUSED NORTH BAY. .
A THUD A THROTTLING OF ENGINES ..AND A STRANGE MAN STEPS ASHORE..
CAW
MR. CARRION .
SSH.. JULIA IF YOU AROUSE THE POLICE, OUR LONG JOURNEY WILL HAVE BEEN IN VAIN...
MR CARRION AT LAST!
ALLAH HAS SMILED ON OUR UNDERTAKING... YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED, MR CARRION?
I AM HERE, GENTLEMEN, WITH OUR FORTUNE!
IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER - AND DON'T LET THE LEGEND FOOL YOU! IT SAYS THAT WHEN THE GOLD IS NOT IN THE PRESENCE OF A LEPRECHAUN, IT CHANGES TO DROSS. HA HA AT THE CURRENT RATE OF EXCHANGE OF $35 AN OUNCE, WE'LL NET SOME $30,000.!" WORTH AN OCEAN VOYAGE, EH?
'TIS GOLD INDEED.
WAIT... WHO IS THE GIRL?
BLIMY, DON'T YOU KNOW 'ER?? COO..SHE SAID YOU'D MADE A DEAL WITH 'ER!
SO, MY DEAR WISP ...YOU ARE NOT MR. CARRION'S FRIEND!
BY MY BEARD I'LL ..
THE SPIRIT!
UH-UH LADY...I'LL TAKE THAT!
AFTER HIM, FOOLS... GET HIM!
'ERE, NOW.. WOT'S GOIN' ON? 'OO GAVE YOU THE RIGHT TO ORDER US ABOUT?
BY ALLAH IT IS NOW EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF!
WHO GETS THE SPIRIT . GETS THE GOLD!
AND AS THE CLOCKS TOLL 11:30, A DEADLY GAME OF HUNTER AND HUNTED BEGINS.. CLOAKED BY THE FOG AND LIMITED TO THE MURKY CONFINES OF THE EVENING MIST...
WELL I'VE GOT JUST 30 MINUTES TO GET THIS GOLD TO HEADQUARTERS .. IF I'M NOT JUMPED
4

AND SO..
'ES GOTTA COME THIS WAY..
DON'T STAND THERE ALI. Y'FOOL. 'ES 'EADIN' THAT WAY - AFTER 'IM!!
UH-OH
BANG BANG BANG
AHA!!
BANG BANG BANG
WELL, DOLAN WHERE IS YOUR GREAT SPIRIT?
TWELVE O'CLOCK. SO THIS IS YOUR EFFICIENT HERO!
GENTLEMEN... KERRIGAN'S GOLD!
HMPH. AT LAST... AND ABOUT TIME, TOO! YOU AMERICANS ARE SO CASUAL ABOUT IMPORTANT THINGS!

LOOK HERE, SIR CLYDE. YOU'RE BEING PRETTY UNGRATEFUL! THE SPIRIT RISKED HIS NECK TO RECOVER YOUR GOLD. I...
THE GOLD? WHERE IS THE GOLD??
WHAT??
EH?
LOOK... ALL THERE IS IN THIS POT IS DROSS!
-: HMPF :- INCOMPETENCE.. GROSS STUPIDITY.. IF I EVER...
DROSS. BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GOLD??
IT WAS IN THERE WHEN CARRION LOOKED AT IT!
HMMMM.
I THINK, SIR CLYDE, WE'D BETTER HOLD THIS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION
INDEED NOT!
AND I WARN YOU, SIR... UNLESS YOU WANT AN INTERNATIONAL LAWSUIT, YOU'D BETTER NOT DETAIN ME!
OAFS. I'LL SUE THAT DOLAN ANYHOW... THIS'LL COST HIM HIS JOB...
?
EH?
CAA
PUBLIC TELEPHONE
HELLO, SPIRIT. . THIS IS MR CARRION... JUST CALLED TO LET YOU KNOW I HAVE THE GOLD... HA HA.. OUTWITTED YOU AGAIN, EH??
...NOT GOLD, YOU SAY..? HA HA.. A CHEAP TRICK... I'M TOO SMART TO FALL FOR THAT!
..BUT WAIT.. CARRION...LOOK IN THE POT. IT'S NOT GOLD, I TELL YOU. :CLICK:
TUM TE TUM
COME, JULIA MY SWEET! WE'RE OFF TO SPEND OUR RICHES!
WELL BLESS ME IF IT AYN'T MISTER CARRION! NOW YOU WOULDN'T BE RUNNIN' OFF WI' OUR BOOTY, WOULD Y'NOW?
ALLAH DELIVERS YOU INTO MY HANDS... ALLAH WILL BE REPAID BY..
SPIV. ALI BEN ER.. UH-OH.
ER.. AH... WAIT, MY FRIENDS.. I'M STILL WORKING FOR YOU... HERE IS YOUR GOLD.. TAKE A LOOK AT IT.. SEE? ENOUGH FOR US ALL!
BLIMEY!
THIS IS MERE DROSS!!
6

'OO D'YA THINK Y'RE KIDDIN'..?
BLIMY Y'RE A SHREWD ONE, YEW ARE! DROSS, EH..?
OOF!
NOW WAIT, GENTLEMEN! THIS IS A PLOT AGAINST ME I MEAN US
WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE GOLD?
POW
NO NO
BOP
WHAM
OUCH
SOCK
PUFF PUFF
HEY, LOOK
WAIT. STOP.. LOOK BEHIND YOU!
WISP!
PUFF PUFF
LET HER GO. SHE'S SAILING OFF WITH THE POT. HAW! WAIT TILL SHE FINDS OUT WHAT'S INSIDE!
SURE, AND 'TWAS FOIN OF 'EM TO BRING IT BACK..
..AS I KNEW THEY WOULD..
A WEEK LATER... POLICE HEADQUARTERS.
LISTEN TO THIS TELETYPE, SPIRIT... THE IMPERIAL INSURANCE COMPANY IN BRITAIN WAS SAVED A VAST SUM OF MONEY TODAY WHEN THE CARETAKERS OF THE KERRIGAN ESTATE REPORTED THE MYSTERIOUS RETURN OF A POT O' GOLD. SIR CLYDE, ESTATE EXECUTOR, CREDITS ITS RETURN TO THE AMERICAN ADVENTURER, THE SPIRIT... A GARDENER, HOWEVER, REPORTS HAVING SEEN A GIRL PROWLING THE GROUNDS AT THE TIME...
A GIRL, EH... A GIRL!!
BY GOLLY, DOLAN, THERE WAS A GIRL ON THE WHARF THAT NIGHT... HMMM. NOW, THERE'S AN OLD IR'SH LEGEND ABOUT PEOPLE WHO TURN DROSS INTO ..
NOW, HOLD IT.. HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! IF YOU TRY TO GIVE ME THAT OLD MALARKEY ABOUT LEPRECHAUNS, I'LL SEND FOR THE POLICE PSYCHIATRIST!!
O K.. O K.

contd. from page 18

had a marvellous run for my money, mine is one of the longest running strips in the country. I never had anything but kindness and consideration from them. I think that's very important. I think thats what puts the comic strip artist in a different category from his contemporaries in comics proper. It's rather like working in a big family. You are protected and the money is good.

CM: However, it's completely changed your social life as well, doing the strip I suppose?

SJ: It has. I mean I don't have a lot of spare time. I always think that the lads who are dancing about in the clubs and picking up ideas in pubs and things, they obviously haven't got much to draw. I mean someone like Frank dickens – his work is all being funny, he hasn't got the chore...

CM: He says that he just spends one day a week to get this six strips completed.

SJ: But then of course I don't suppose he could do his work unless he were a gregarious person and able to go out and about. I don't have to speak to people.

CM: He has to use people for his ideas.

SJ: Absolutely. So I suppose he's enjoying his work in a different way from me. If I were more organised I dare say I could get more time off. The time I do have off I enjoy, I do a lot of chatting with the people in the paper. People like yourselves – you've told me a few things today I didn't know. I'm not bored with the subject you understand. It's not a question of being bored – it's a question of being exhausted!

CM: How is the pay in the comic strip world compared to the pay in the comic book world?

SJ: Well I don't know about the comic book world but the pay... they used to say the standard payment up to about two or three years ago for a daily strip was around about £70 for the drawing but people could command up to £100 for the drawing. When I came to London in 1952 the average comic page Amalgamated Press were paying for was bringing in about £17 or £18 a week, for a comic page of about six or eight drawings, and I believe that many of the pages in Fleetway are still being paid for at the same rate, and that's after 20 years! That's incredible, it's just not on!

CM: What sort of money can you earn in this business?

SJ: Can I dodge this one slightly and simply say that writing and drawing has put me into the dreaded VAT category! But there are plenty of people who are just putting one brick on top of another and earning as much as me and certainly guys selling motor cars are earning a lot more than me! But it's worth a lot more when it's a sinicure, when I know that it's weekly, I can budget to that. I've an obligation of course, one has to keep the standard up and that sort of thing. I think that had not the cost of living gone up so idiotically that it would've been a very fair wage indeed and I wouldn't go and ask them for any more.

CM: When a strip is syndicated to, say, five or six papers does that effect your salary?

SJ: Syndication is paid by arrangement. Many artists have sydication right from the word go.

CM: You say that the system is different in the States though?

SJ: What happens here is: I draw for the Daily Express which is sold all over the country. In the U.S. there are no two papers alike, every city and state has its own paper so a man in Milawaukee is not going to read a strip if it only appears in the New York Times. You're talking in syndication terms in hundreds of papers. I mean, they reckoned that Alex Raymond was earning about $50,000 a year when he was killed in 1956, I think. $50,000 a year was a lotta dough! CM: What do you think, basically, of the American comic book world?

SJ: I don't go out and buy them in any great numbers but I am always interested to read them. Of course, naturally, I will admire those which are well drawn. On the other hand I think some of the ideas are extremely good. I've seen some certain semi-pornographic ones. I think it's all right to make social comment but I think when you start on pornography you're on a very slippery slope because I found when I was drawing fairly near-the-bone sexual situations with Hawke and the girls, that suddenly I became aware that I then had a captive audience. When you're drawing nude girls and men and the sexual situation you don't have to try very hard, because you know that you are going to get a captive readership, simply because they're seeing a naked breast or whatever it happens to be. That of course is a very corrupting thing, that is where pornography corrupts – it corrupts the artist because you suddenly don't have to try any more. I could fill my strip with nude girls all the time, but the point is anyone could do that. But this is not the name of the game, the name of the game is to give interest to people who are passed sex, people who are not particularly interested in sex, people who have a perfectly full sex life of their own and don't want to read it vicariously, you've still got to pull them in. You've got to pull them in with something quite different from sex. If the underground comics do slip up at all they do tend to rely on the shock aspect in some cases. Having said that I think that the ideas that are inherent in them – are a little naive. Let me put it this way, I cannot get into "Spider-Man" and things like that. I find that boring because it's repetitive and its completely illogical. The "Silver Surfer" has a kind of high, camp drama, the drawings are superb, the action and the feel of it, the immense power of good over evil comes over very strongly and they are in the heroic mould. But things like "Spider-Man", after you've read one of those you get to the stage where you really feel that you've had enough of that. "Deadman" is about the only one that I can follow of that kind which is so way out; I think they are all beautifully drawn. I think that the "X-Men" when Neal Adams was doing it was superbly drawn. You can put me on record as liking these comics. When it comes down to nasties – badly drawn nasties – I'm not too keen on that because I think it's spurious. If I have any criticism at all of this field it is that they come too strong, they hit you right between the eyes right from the word 'go' they don't save anything up, if you see what I mean. And I think that you have to be a real fan to be able to get round that and look at the true quality of them.

CM: They have to be like this really because of the age group to which they are catering.

SJ: I don't mean to be patronising when I say this, but I do think that the level of critique amongst American youngsters is definitely lower than it is here. I think that age for age and educational standard for educational standard, the British child is just that little more advanced and a little more difficult to please. I'm too long in the tooth now to get excited about every comic I see. "Mandrake the Magician" for example, I just can't get excited about that. It's badly drawn, now. When I was young and it was in colour and it was a big sheet it was something to hold, it wasn't just a comic it was the whole feel of a great big paper and that was O.K. Then that very claustrophobic strip 'Little Orphan Annie' it was a frightening strip, there was something so horrific about it in the way it was drawn that it is a memorable strip. There were weird characters moving around in it. Far more horrifying than any of the "Mandrake" stuff, because "Mandrake" was really a feeble copy of much of the "Flash Gordon" idea.

CM: Who were your childhood heroes?

SJ: The people that I read and learned from were the people that were writing and drawing from D.C.Thomson comics. "The Wizard" and "The Hotspur" were full of stories about "Red Circle School", for example, "The Truth about Wilson" and "The Last Rocket to Venus" - very good science fiction stories way back about 1933/4, when the earth is freezing and all the people get out in their space ships. That was very advanced for its time. I think that Dick Tracy got to be a very memorable comic book, because of the two-way wrist radio, and that was incredible as an idea. In those days, I think, kids did like the idea of comics with little asides and little arrows pointing. Comics have become a very sophisticated medium now.

CM: Perhaps this is a bit of an unfair question but I wondered what you thought of your competition sf-wise; "Garth", the now defunct "Scarth" and "Danielle", the new strip in the Evening News?

SJ: I've always had the greatest admiration for Frank Bellamy's work. Together with Frank Hampson (Dan Dare) he created a standard of draughtmanship in Britain which is still a high-water mark today, and he has brought a more explicite style to "Garth", which did have a parculiar attraction of its own but which lacked the 'reality' I think an sf strip demands. John Burns must surely be the natural successor to the late Jim Holdaway, and that's saying plenty! His "Danielle" strip in the Evening News has all the crispness and style with which he drew "The Seekers" and I'm sure it will develop into a successful strip. I must say that I should hate to be in competition line for line with either of them, but fortunately for me I have had rather longer, 19 years in fact, to develop my own particular brand of sf and I don't think we are breaking into each others territories. "Scarth" started well with a good feeling of living in a future age but it soon became rather lightweight - all heads and bare bosoms - I don't think that is what the sf buff is looking for.

CM: To come back to the writing. To create a perfect strip you've got to create a oneness in writing and art. You shouldn't distinguish between the two.

SJ: I don't think you can. It took me a long time to get Hawke to the state it's in today. This, of course, is only a personal opinion I'm not saying the majority of people would back me on this, but I do think there is an aspect of the Hawke strip which is not to be found anywhere else and I think it is something to do with an understanding of what has gone before and a kind of welding of drawing to the best ideas in science fiction. I know what are the best stories in science fiction because I have made a study of it, I know what kind of stories really do intrigue people.

CM: I was wondering what sort of basic techniques you use for getting Jeff Hawke into the story. Peter O'Donnell was saying that he thought the best way of starting up a story was to introduce the villains first. Modesty very rarely caused a situation herself, rather it was the outside forces that sparked off an adventure.

SJ: In this latest story Hawke arrives pretty early on the scene but in fact in the story where the earth was to be sold it went on for weeks without Hawke appearing and I think this is very good. I even get to the stage when I have the head of the hero cutting out the title, all you see is 'JE' because everyone knows it is 'Jeff Hawke'. Peter's quite right here because otherwise you'll get no relief from having to show your characters all the time. This is where the paper does us proud because it does not insist on that. It's perfectly happy to leave it to us to do it properly. And I think this is a very good idea. If you look back on all my stories you'll find that very few of them begin with Hawke on the first day I always try to produce a little intro just to whet peopl's appetites.

CM: Do you think it's a bad thing to leave it for weeks without the main character appearing? Aren't you afraid that your readers might lose interest?

SJ: No, and this is the whole point, your story should be so strong that people don't care about where the hero is. They know he will be coming up in time. What you must do is to establish the two or three characters very strongly who are, in fact, activating the story to begin with so that you're more concerned about what is happening to them. There's a very fine balance of course - you've got to be careful not to overdo it. We did have one little in-between story with the funny little 'beehive' men. Klask and his pals, where Hawke did not appear at all during the whole story. In fact, I have often toyed with the idea of a strip in which there is no real hero. The heroes are killed off one by one and a new one comes up. I get my inspiration from the oddest things, for instance, I am steeped in nostalgia and love watching old movies on TV and its always rather nice to put something of that into the strip and its also very nice to receive readers' letters where you know that they are thinking of the same thing and are responding to what you are doing. We have in the past put in little asides and the readers have picked us up saying "Isn't that so and so in the backgroud? It's a game isn't it? A nice way to earn a living. It's the next best thing to making movies I suppose.

As Nick has already said in his editorial, few were as surprised as us when we heard that the Daily Express was dropping "Jeff Hawke" from its daily strips section. This is the paper in which Sydney launched his 'space rider' and which has continued to carry Jeff's adventures in an unbroken run of 20 years as of February this year.

When we interviewed Sydney towards the end of last year there was no indication whatsoever that something like this was going to happen, on the contrary, Jeff seemed set for a very long life in the Express. But as of April 18th 1974 the strip has disappeared from the paper and no reason was given for this action. One can only wonder as to the thought processes that led to this amazing decision.

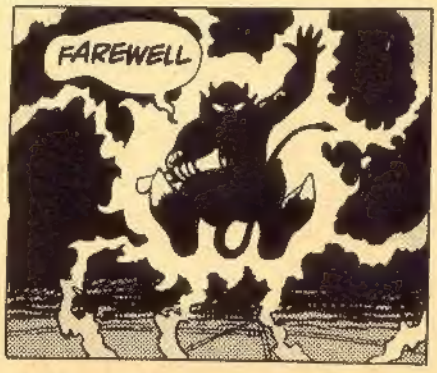
However, all is not gloom. As of going to press (May 74) I have heard that the paper has been swamped with cries of protest against this decision from the many fans of "Jeff Hawke" around the country. The phone calls started almost as soon as the strip was dropped and the letters began to pour in and are now, I believe, averaging out at 20 per day. And they are not just from the average man-in-the-street, many come from University professors and learned men (surely, the Express must be thinking, people like this don't read comic strips?!). Naturally enough the paper is more than slightly surprised by all this and there are strong rumours gathering that Jeff will soon be restored to his rightful place in the Express.

Please don't get the impression that "Jeff Hawke" as a strip is finished, far from it. Sydney has been continuing to write and draw Jeff's exploits for syndiaction as many other paper both here and abroad carry "Jeff Hawke". So if, and when, the Express restarts the strip they will be behind many other paers by quite a few weeks.

Sydney hope that now he will have more control over his strip. For a while before its cancellation, the Express was urging Sydney to put more girls into the stories to 'spice up' the action.

We hope that you've enjoyed this interview and will discover, like us, that "Jeff Hawke" is one of the best produced British newspaper strips of all time.

- RICHARD.



SPOTLIGHT ON EUROPE

The 'pocket' (or digest) size comic book was introduced into Italy during the immediate post-war period, and gradually replaced both the cubersome papers and characteristic "All Italiana" size horizontal comics. Its success was due to two reasons - the first was an economic one - that of the rising price of paper - and the second, practical. Because of their size they were better exhibited on newspaper kiosks thant he hundreds of regular comic books.

The first Italian "Giornalino" was "Topolino" (Mickey Mouse), which was immediately followed by "Cucciolo", "Tiramolla" and a myriad of other comic books.

This situation remained unchanged until the winter of 1962, when a new monthly thriller pocket-comic book appeared, unobtrusively, in the newspaper kiosks, aimed, for the first time ever, at an adult audience. It was called "Diabolik". It was the very first of the 'thriller' comics and at that time no one thought that it would become a seemingly inexhaustable series.

From first impressions it would have been difficult not to mistake "Diabolik" for one of the countless, popular 'written' thrillers then circulating on the stands. The 'for adults only' label did little to differentiate it from the overtly erotic publications that were issued in such large quantities by publisher Gino Sansoni.

However, this new comic book was different. It was written by two sisters from Milan, Angela and Luciana Giussani. Both were well known for their enterprising spirit and had, the year before, produced a successful series of 'surprise envelopes' containing attractive plastic figurines. They had also tried, though unsuccessfully, to market John Cullen Murphy's famous "Big Ben Bolt" strip.

But the early "Diabolik" comic books were not an instant success with our indifferent reading public, and were eventually sold to novelty houses who reissued them them in sealed 'surprise envelopes', as is still the custom for most Italian retuns. However, 1963 saw a revival of interest in the comic strip which reached its peak the following year, and then settled down at a fairly constant high level, and of course "Diabolik" benefitted.

But who is Diabolik?

Diabolik is a super-criminal, an athletic anti-hero. He is cast in the usual hero-mould of being both brave and clever. He is also a master of disguise who can not only change his facial features (with the aid of plastic masks of his own invention, and coloured contact lenses) but also has gadgets which can transform his physical appearance.

He is the modern-day version of the mythical Arsenio Lupin, or the famous Fantomas, in that he doesn't fight on the side of 'the law' - as do traditional heroes - but against it for amoral purposes. Theft and murder are his modus vivendi - but only if achieved with the ability and intelligence of a master chess-player.

When the reading public accepted Diabolik he was immediately branded by the puritans as "exulting crime and violence". And one can still open a newspaper today to find that among the personal effects of an insane murderer was found a copy of "Diabolik". For this the strip has been nicknamed "fumetto nero". And much has been said of the unfavourable influence of the character on the people of our country and, in particular, the youth of Italy. But I disagree that the character instigates violence. His methods, although scientifically feasable, are so complex as to be almost impossible to imitate.

But Diabolik doesn't symbolise "evil" in every sense - he may not be granted immorality. He is a superman and for him the morality of the man in the street does not exist. His morality is very personal, completely remote from that of tradition. Stealing and killing does

not ease his conscience - he has a conscience and has proved it many times. His morality prevents him from shattering his monogamy with Eva Kent, his beautiful and inseperable companion - she is always the protagonist and an essential figure in the stories. It also bids him to help all those who have aided him in good faith.

Diabolik will destroy those who betray or deceive him, likewise he will eliminate weak people who might cross his path, not because he is a sadist, but for the same reason that we may crush an insect which disturbs us. He respects those who are afraid of him or who may oppose him with conviction equal to his. His main adversary is Ginko, a policeman who is Diabolik's double - perhaps an alter ego who has chosed good from evil.

The stories of Diabolik represent the encounter between two equally pure consciences who have deliberately chosen differnt and opposing paths.

"Diabolik" has been made into a feature film ("Danger: Diabolik". Directed by Mario Bava and starring John Phillip Law and Marisa Mell. 1968.), two records and several merchandising ideas. Recently a club has been formed which produces many of these merchandising lines.

The comic books, though now written by a variety of writers, are still under the firm control of the Giussani sisters who personally supervise the art assignments. The present staff are:- Flavio Bozzoli (pencils), Alarico Gattia (pencils), Sergio Zanibono (pencils), Glauco Cretti (pencils and inks), Enzo Facciolo (pencils and inks), Paolo Ongara (inks), Lino Jeva (inks), Franco Paludetti (pencils) and Saverio Micheloni (inks).

Like the famous "Tex Willer" by Bonelli and Calleppini, "Diabolik" is translated into many of the European and South American languages

Again, like the famous Italian western hero, "Diabolik" has given life to a series of great importance - "fumetto nero" o "per adulti" ("for adults only").

Gianni Bono

Gianni Bono is editor of the excellant Italian fanzine "If", official organ of the Club Gli Amici Del Fumetto.

FANTASY CENTRE

43 Station Road, Harlesden, London NW10 4UP, England. Telephone 01-965 3643

Robert E. Howard
Edgar Rice Burroughs
Arthur C. Clarke
Arkham House
Amazing Stories
Astounding
Weird Tales

Shop hours 10.30 to 6.00, Monday to Saturday
100 yards from Willesden Junction Station

Send for our regular monthly lists.

For all your
SCIENCE FICTION
FANTASY
SWORD & SORCERY
New and out of print
books - Magazines - Paperbacks

Britain's Largest Comic Fan Gathering

Saturday Oct. 5th

COMIC MART

free

HOLBORN ASSEMBLY HALL JOHN'S MEWS, LONDON

COMIC MART

Comic Mart is Britain's largest fantasy fan gathering for all fans of comics, s.f., pulps, films, posters, etc. The 100,000 comics on sale range from the late 30's (DC, Timely etc.)to the very latest on sale in the States (Dec '74) and comics such as Conan, The Shadow, Frankenstein, OMAC, Swamp Thing, Dr. Strange, etc.,..... It opens at mid-day, followed by an auction at 5.00, a discussion/interview at 6.00 and ..... a FREE fantasy film show at 7.00. Closedown will be sometime between 10.00 and 11.00.

HOW TO GET THERE

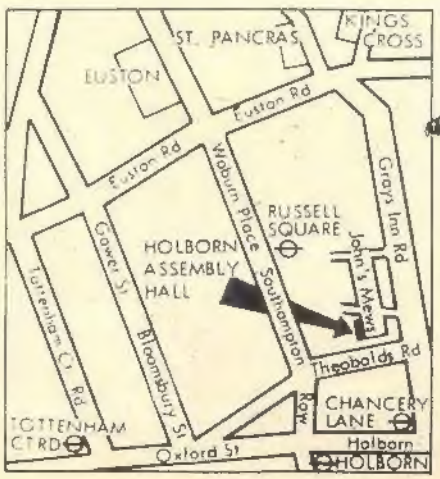
BUSES 19 38 55 172 to Holborn Library, Theobalds Rd.
OR 45 171 to Gray's Inn Road.
To find the Hall either go through the library, behind which stands the Hall, or follow the signs from John St.
TRAINS to Holborn Underground Station, and then it's a five minute walk.
CARS - excellent parking facilities.

FOOD AND DRINK

The Comic Mart Cafe will be open from 12.30 pm to 4.30, and during the film show intermission for the sale of tea, coffee, soft drinks and sandwiches. There are also a number of pubs very close by.

DEALERS

Owing to increased demand for tables, bookings can only be taken in advance (none on the day). Tables are £1.50 each, and payment, accompanied by an S.A.E (the same goes for enquiries), should be sent to:
Nick Landau
10 Ladbroke Walk
London W11 3PW
England



FUTURE COMIC MARTS

July 20th and/or 21st . SUMMER SPECIAL
October 5th Holborn Assembly Hall
December 14th born Assembly Hall

DAVE
GIBBONS.